



TV Production Guidelines

Use for April 3, 2023 Funding Deadline

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Overview of the Bell Fund

Mission

To support Canadian media content makers in creating for and connecting with, audiences here and everywhere.

Since 1997 the Bell Fund has received over \$275 million in financial contributions from Bell TV to support Canadian Independent Producers in the development and production of great Canadian content. In 2001, the Bell Fund was awarded an endowment of \$10 million from Bell TV, as a result of a tangible benefits package. The revenues generated by this endowment are made available for development funding.

Background

The Bell Fund is a not-for-profit organization. It has been certified by the CRTC as an independent production fund eligible to receive and administer contributions from broadcast distribution undertakings. The Fund is governed by a nine-member board operating at arm's length from Bell TV and has offices in Toronto and Montreal.

Guiding Principles

The Bell Fund is committed to supporting a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive industry across Canada. This means supporting:

- Screen-based producers/creators who identify as Black, Indigenous, and those from racialized communities;
- Screen-based producers/creators from underrepresented groups including but not limited to 2SLGBTQIA+ and people with disabilities;
- Emerging, screen-based producers/creators and teams;
- Gender parity;
- Regional representation and OLMC communities.

Production teams are encouraged to consult resources like [ON-Screen Protocols & Pathways: A Media Production Guide](#) for guidance on working with First Nations, Metis, and Inuit communities and [Being Seen: Directives for Creating Authentic and Inclusive Content](#), for recommendations and best practices for creating content relating to working with Black, People of Colour, 2SLGBTQIA+ and People with Disabilities communities.

General Policies

The Board has complete discretion in the administration of Bell Fund programs including, without limitation, determination of eligibility of applicants and projects and all funding decisions. All Board decisions are final.

Program guidelines may be changed at any time, provided that guidelines publicly posted at the time of a Program deadline will be the applicable guidelines for that application. Producers are encouraged to ensure that they have reviewed the most current guidelines, templates, and policies available on the Bell Fund website prior to submitting their application.

Bell Fund recipients are expected to support an inclusive and respectful workplace climate; free of discrimination, bullying and harassment.

Content must be compliant with all standards and policies applicable to broadcasting and to intellectual property laws and not infringe upon any public or private rights and not otherwise contravene any civil and criminal laws in effect in Canada.

Failure to Comply and Misrepresentation: Any failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the guidelines and or any misrepresentation of information in connection with an application, as determined by Bell Fund, may result in the application being deemed ineligible and repayment of any advanced funds (with interest) may be demanded. It might also affect the eligibility of future applications.

1. Introduction

The Bell Fund launched a TV program in 2018 to support the production of great, market-driven Canadian content in the genres of lifestyle, drama, comedy, and documentary series.

Funding will be allocated to programs as a function of broadcasters' Canadian Programming Expenditure ("CPE") (excluding news and sports) in accordance with the CRTC's Annual Financial Summaries for the previous fiscal and as set out in more detail below.

For the purposes of the allocation of funds for this Program we are distinguishing between major production funders (see below for definition), private, and public broadcasters.

2. Definitions

A major production funder: is a Canadian broadcaster group (which includes private conventional television stations, specialty services and linear pay TV services owned by the group) whose CPE, excluding news (Category 1) and sports (Category 6) as reported to the CRTC for 2020 is at least \$125 million for English programming and \$50 million for French programming.

A private broadcaster: is defined as a Canadian broadcaster who is not part of a major production funder and whose CPE (excluding news and sports) for 2020 is less than \$125 million for English programming and \$50 million for French programming.

A public broadcaster: is defined as the CBC/Radio Canada and educational broadcasters.

Canadian Independent production company: is a for-profit company (a taxable Canadian corporation within the meaning of Canada's Income Tax Act) carrying on business in Canada, with a Canadian business address, owned and controlled by Canadians, whose business is the production of film, video or live programs for distribution.

Broadcaster Affiliated production company: is a for profit Canadian company (a taxable Canadian corporation within the meaning of Canada's Income Tax Act) carrying on business in Canada, with a Canadian business address, owned and controlled by Canadians, whose business is the production of film, video or live programs for distribution and, in which, a company with a licence to carry on business as a broadcasting undertaking (aka a broadcaster) or any company related to the broadcasting undertaking owns, in aggregate, a 30% or greater (voting) equity interest.

3. Overview

As Bell Fund is committed to supporting a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive industry, we encourage applicants from all regions of Canada and applications built on respectful and inclusive guiding principles.

Funding is for 30-60 minute (half hour and one hour) series in the English or French language. Series must have no less than 6 episodes for a comedy, lifestyle, documentary series (minimum 3 episodes for 'blue chip' documentary series with budgets in excess of \$500,000/hour) and 4 episodes for a drama series.

4. Eligible Applicants

Applicant must operate as a Canadian Independent Production Company (see definitions).

5. Eligibility Requirements

The following conditions must be met, and the documents submitted at time of application: (see the document check list for a full list of required documents).

- a. Effective 2022, an applicant may submit a maximum of two applications for funding in any one year for the TV Major Production Funder and TV Selective streams.
- b. Must have a commitment from a Canadian broadcaster (either a major production funder or a private broadcaster; see definitions) with a plan to be broadcast within 18 months of completion and delivery of the series to the broadcaster.
- c. Principal photography has not been completed at the time of the application deadline (for TV Major Production Funder: at the time of application.)
- d. Must qualify for CRTC or Canadian audio-visual certification office (CAVCO) program certification with a minimum of 8 out of 10 points (unless otherwise stated in CAVCO guidelines or regulations) or as an official treaty co-production certified by Telefilm.
- e. A minimum of 75% of program expenses are for services provided by Canadians or Canadian companies or subject to official treaty co-production guidelines.
- f. Underlying rights are owned and meaningfully developed by Canadians and creative and financial control remains with the Canadian producer

throughout the production and post production. All distribution rights are owned and initially controlled by the Canadian producer.

- g. Program must be closed captioned and contain described video.
- h. Must conform to the Canadian Association of Broadcasters' (CAB) code of ethics as well as the CRTC's programming standards including but not limited to sex-role portrayals and television violence.
- i. Applicants applying for a series that received slate development financing must complete and deliver the development prior to applying.
- j. Effective 2023, funding will be limited to any two 2 seasons of a series. Eg. In 2023, if your series has already had two seasons funded by Bell Fund you are not eligible to apply for that series.

6. Funding Contribution

Subject to the Broadcaster committing to a fair-market licence fee as part of the financing, funding available for eligible projects in the drama and comedy category is a maximum contribution equal to \$250,000, not to exceed 40% of the production's eligible costs and in the lifestyle and documentary categories, a maximum contribution equal to \$150,000, not to exceed 40% of the production's eligible costs/budget.

Broadcaster-affiliated companies are limited to a maximum of 25 percent of the available funds in a program.

7. Eligible Programming 1

7.1. Comedy, Drama

Comedy, Drama – is defined as an entertainment production of a fictional nature including situation and sketch comedies in a series or limited series format. While children's/youth programming is ineligible, dramatic programming targeted to families is eligible because of its attraction to people of all ages – adults and children together or adults without children.

7.2. Lifestyle

Lifestyle programming presents information or explores topics in a manner that emphasizes the practical information aspect of the subject matter. While the

¹ Definitions excerpted from CMF guidelines

programming is informative, it typically doesn't provide critical analysis or commentary. Usually, lifestyle programming reflects the aspirations of the viewer.

Programming often focuses on subject matter in which accomplishing practical objectives is illustrated, discussed, or explored. Practical information is shared with the primary goal of helping to achieve those objectives and thus, the aspirations of the viewer.

Can include but not limited to the following:

1. An unveiling of a "result" which is the product of host's expertise – ex – Rock Solid Builds, Bake Boss, Tous pour un chalet, Des idées de grandeurs, Le jour J, Rénos à petits prix.
2. An exploration of destinations by a host which relies on commentary – ex – Big Food Bucket List, Partir autrement en famille.

7.3. Documentary Series

A Documentary is defined as an original work of non-fiction, primarily designed to inform but that may also educate and entertain, providing an in-depth critical analysis of a specific subject or point of view over the course of at least 30 minutes.

8. Ineligible Programming

Children's & youth, tutorials, Reality, Reality competition, international formats, Comedy Festival programming, standup comedy, talk shows, awards shows, broadcaster in-house programming.

9. Application Procedure

Refer to:

- Document Checklist;
- Project Details Form;
- Broadcaster Support Form.

TV Selective

Any public or private broadcaster may support up to (3) applications per deadline. When there are multiple channels affiliated by ownership to a parent company the company is allowed up to three (3) applications. There must be a Bell Fund Broadcaster support form provided to the producer/applicant, in order to apply.

MPF Envelope

Each project approved by the MPF for submission to the Bell Fund must meet all the eligibility requirements:

- a. MPF shall provide a Bell Fund Broadcaster support form to the Producer that allows the Producer to submit an application for funding to the Bell Fund
- b. All funds will be paid to the Producer/Applicant for the eligible project.

9.1. Assessment of Applications

Refer to Assessment Criteria:

- TV Selective
- TV MPF

Assessment is based on 3 main criteria: TEAM, CONTENT and FEASIBILITY

Extent to which key roles in the creative team are occupied by individuals who identify as Black, Indigenous, and those from racialized communities; and underrepresented groups including 2SLGBTQIA+ and people with disabilities;

Extent to which key roles in the creative team are occupied by women.