



2024 TV PRODUCTION PROGRAM
GUIDELINES

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ABOUT 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, inclusive and accessible industry across Canada. This means supporting screen-based producers/creators who are Indigenous and/or identify as being from an Equity-seeking Community such as Black, racialized, women and gender-diverse, 2SLGBTQIA+, persons with disabilities, regional and Official Language Minority Community (OLMC), or emerging screen-based producers/creators and teams.

Please consider how you engage with individuals and communities as you proceed with your Projects. Applicants and production teams are encouraged to refer to resources (such as the Black Screen Office's [Being Seen: Directives for Creating Authentic and Inclusive Content](#)) and to respect the guiding principles and best practices set out in the Indigenous Screen Office's [On-Screen Protocols & Pathways: A Media Production Guide](#).

INTERPRETATION AND OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

These Guidelines are for the information and convenience of Applicants. They provide an overview of the objectives of the Bell Fund, the manner in which the Bell Fund is administered, and information on typical administrative practices of the Bell Fund. Compliance with these Guidelines is a prerequisite for funding eligibility.

Interpretation

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.

All Applicants must also abide by the [Program Policies](#) of the Bell Fund.

Projects that receive Bell Fund funding in a given year are subject to the Guidelines and Bell Fund policies in effect for that fiscal year. To be clear, changes to Bell Fund Guidelines and/or Policies made in a subsequent fiscal year will not apply retroactively, unless specifically stated. The Bell Fund fiscal year is January 1 to December 31.

Please note: These Guidelines may be changed or modified as required, without notice. Please consult the Bell Fund website at www.bellfund.ca for the latest Guideline news and documentation.

Provision of Documentation

It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure the Bell Fund receives all relevant documentation and to update such documentation and information after a material change. The Bell Fund may request other documentation and information to conduct an assessment and evaluation of the Project and, once assessed, to complete file reviews. For the purposes of Project assessment and evaluation, the Bell Fund reserves the right to rely solely on the written and audiovisual materials initially submitted by the Applicant.

Failure to Comply

If an Applicant fails to comply with these Guidelines, as determined by the Bell Fund, then the Bell Fund may refuse the application, revoke the eligibility status of the Applicant's Project and may demand repayment of any sums paid to the Applicant.

Misrepresentation

If at any time, an Applicant as required by the Guidelines or as requested by the Bell Fund, provides false information, or omits material information in connection with an Application, the Applicant may suffer serious consequences. These may include, among other outcomes:

- Loss of eligibility for funding of the current Project;
- Loss of eligibility for funding of future Projects;
- Repayment of any funds already advanced, with interest; and/or
- Criminal prosecution, in the case of fraud.

These measures may be imposed not only on the Applicant but also on related, associated and affiliated companies and individuals (as determined by the Bell Fund at its sole discretion). Any Applicant receiving approval for funding will be required to sign a legally enforceable Financing Agreement, which includes further provisions concerning misrepresentations, defaults, and related matters.

Program Policies

These Guidelines are to be read in conjunction with the [Bell Fund Program Policies](#).

GENERAL POLICIES

Bell Fund Applicants are expected to support an inclusive and respectful workplace climate; free of discrimination, bullying and harassment. This includes their dealings with the Bell Fund and its Board and staff.

Bell Fund encourages all Applicants to implement more environmentally-sustainable practices including the use of cleaner technologies and reducing the use of unsustainable resources, in the development, production and exploitation of projects.

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/or criminal laws in effect in Canada.

ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility Support

The Bell Fund welcomes applications from people with disabilities, people who are deaf, and people who have barriers to accessing technology. Support for application assistance is also available to First Nations, Inuit or Métis applicants facing language, geographic and/or cultural barriers.

Upon request, the Bell Fund may commit funds of up to \$500 towards the hiring of service providers to assist with the preparation of an application to Bell Fund Programs.

Services may include, but are not limited to, assistance to create an account and navigate the Online Application Portal, and to transcribe/edit/organize/translate application materials.

Please note that receiving Accessibility Support funds does not guarantee a successful application nor will it impact evaluation scores during the application evaluation process. To request support, please contact Bell Fund at info@bellfund.ca at least four (4) weeks before the applicable closing deadline for a Program.

Accessible Content

The Bell Fund requires all projects funded in production to be delivered with Closed Captioning and Described Video.

TV PRODUCTION PROGRAM

1. INTRODUCTION

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

There are two streams within this program:

1. Major Production Funder
2. TV Selective

Funding is allocated as a function of a Broadcasters' Canadian Programming Expenditure ("CPE") (excluding news and sports) in accordance with the CRTC's Aggregate Annual Returns for the previous fiscal and as set out in more detail below.

For the purposes of the allocation of funds in this Program there is a distinction between Major Production Funder¹, and other Canadian private and public broadcasters.

2. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible Applicants to the Television Production Program will be either a:

1. "Canadian Independent Production Company" - Is a for-profit (i.e., a taxable Canadian corporation, within the meaning of Canada's Income Tax Act) production company that is Canadian-controlled as determined in sections 26 to 28 of the Investment Canada Act and has its head office in Canada, or a
2. "Broadcaster Affiliated Production Company" - Is a Canadian production company 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 broadcasting licensee, or any company related to the broadcasting licensee owns, in aggregate a 30% or greater (voting) equity interest.

Broadcaster Affiliated Production Companies are limited to a maximum of 25% of the TV Production Program Funding.

Eligible Applicants must also be in good standing with the Bell Fund. Note that Applicants that received Bell Fund Slate Development funding for the Project for which they are applying must

¹ Defined in the [Bell Fund Program Policies](#)

complete and deliver the Slate Development (for that Project) prior to submitting the application to the TV Production Program.

3. ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Project must be a series in an Eligible Genre (defined below) that meet the following criteria:

1. Episodes must be at least half-hour (based on standard broadcast running times).
2. The series must include:
 - Comedy and Lifestyle series require a minimum of six (6) episodes;
 - Drama series require a minimum of four (4) episodes; or
 - Documentary series require a minimum of six (6) episodes, with an exception for premium documentary series with production budgets of \$500,000/hour which will only require a minimum of three (3) episodes.
3. Principal photography has not been completed at the time of the Application.
4. 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 coproduction certified by Telefilm. Additionally, at least one of either the Director or Screenwriter positions and at least one of the two lead performers must be Canadian.
5. Underlying rights are owned and meaningfully developed by Canadians and creative and financial control remains with the Canadian producer throughout the production and postproduction. All distribution rights are owned and initially controlled by the Canadian producer. The Bell Fund acknowledges that copyright for Indigenous productions may be held by communities and is open to ways to demonstrate the required control.
6. 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.
7. Must have confirmed Market Interest (see below).

Eligible Genres

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.

Lifestyle

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

Documentary

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.

Ineligible Genres

The following is a non-exhaustive list of genres of Projects that are not eligible in the TV Production Program:

- Children's & Youth
- Tutorials
- Reality
- Reality Competition

- Variety and Performing Arts
- Standup comedy
- Talk shows
- Awards shows
- News
- Sports
- Industrial or corporate videos
- Infomercial or promotional
- Broadcaster in-house programming

Market Interest

In order to be eligible, Applications must include a commitment from a Canadian Broadcaster (defined below) and a completed [Broadcaster Support Form](#).

“Canadian Broadcaster” is one of the following:

- a Canadian programming undertaking, public or private, licensed to operate by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC)
- an online service owned, controlled and operated by a Canadian CRTC-licensed programming undertaking;
- an online service owned, controlled and operated by a Canadian broadcasting distribution undertaking (“BDU”), licensed to operate by the CRTC;
- CRTC-licensed VOD services.²

Canadian Broadcasters (including Broadcasting Groups as determined by the CRTC) may support up to three (3) Applications per TV Selective Deadline.

Applications supported by a Major Production Funder for submission to the Bell Fund must adhere to these Guidelines including meeting all eligibility requirements. The Major Production Funder must also complete a Broadcaster Support Form for each Project.

² Note that Community Channels do not meet this definition.

4. DEADLINES AND APPLICATION PROCESS

All Applications must be submitted through the [Bell Fund Application Portal](#). Documents must be current and relevant to this application deadline.

Important Dates

TV Selective

March 11, 2024	Application Portal Opens
April 8, 2024 (7pm ET)	DEADLINE: Application Portal Closes

Major Production Funder

March 11, 2024	Application Portal Opens
December 2, 2024 (7pm ET)	DEADLINE: Application Portal Closes

Number of Applications

An Applicant may submit a maximum of two (2) applications for funding in each of the Major Production Funder and TV Selective streams.

Funding is limited to any two (2) seasons of a series. E.g. If your series has already had two (2) seasons funded by Bell Fund you are not eligible to apply for that series. The seasons need not be consecutive.

Application Assessment

All Applications in the TV Production Program are subject to assessment.

Projects in TV Selective are assessed through a competitive process. To make funding decisions, the Bell Fund will rely on a jury of industry experts; recommendations from this jury will be made to the Board for consideration and final selection using the Evaluation Grid (see section 7 below).

Funding decisions are made by the Board of Directors. It is the intent that funding decisions are made by the Board of Directors 10 -12 weeks following the application deadline.

Advancing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The Bell Fund is committed to supporting a more equitable, diverse, inclusive and accessible industry across Canada. This means supporting screen-based producers/creators who are Indigenous and/or identify as being from an Equity-seeking

community such as Black, racialized, women and gender-diverse, 2SLGBTQIA+, persons with disabilities, regional³ and Official Language Minority Community (OLMC), or emerging screen-based producers/creators and teams.

Self-ID Process

To further the commitments established in the Bell Fund 's guiding principles, measure progress, and align with other funders, Bell Fund is collecting information related to identity and representation from individuals associated with applications to its programs. Bell Fund's Self-ID allows individuals to disclose their demographic information on a voluntary basis, confidentially and securely to the Bell Fund.

Using a questionnaire is based on the Canada Media Fund's PERSONA-ID and Shaw Rocket Fund's data collection systems, the collection and analysis of self-identification data will allow the Bell Fund to:

- Determine compliance with assessment criteria (where applicable).
 - Assess whether progress is being made in achieving the goals set out in our guiding principles.
 - Consider any changes that may be required to the program guidelines to meet objectives.
 - Provide aggregated data to the Board and other industry stakeholders who have an interest in the Bell Fund.
1. Applicants are required to provide a Self-Identification Contact List with emails.
 2. Following the close of the deadline, Bell Fund staff will email those on the contact lists of Eligible Applications a unique link (per project) for those individuals to optionally disclose elements of their identities.
 3. It is expected that each applicant shareholder and key creative personnel (producer, writer and director) will complete the questionnaire ("I prefer not to answer " is an option within the questions).
 4. The questionnaire must be completed within seven (7) days of the email invitation. After that time, if the questionnaire is not submitted, the information may not be included in the processing of the application.
 5. The Bell Fund will notify the Applicant when the unique links are sent to the individuals. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to confirm that their teams have received their links.

³ Regional defined as 150 kilometres outside of Toronto (English-language projects) and Montreal (French-language projects).

Please notify the Bell Fund (info@bellfund.ca) if someone on your Contact List has not received a link.⁴

5. FUNDING CONTRIBUTION

Amount of Contribution

TV Selective

Subject to the Broadcaster committing to a fair-market value licence fee as part of the financing, the Bell Fund will solely decide the amount of its financial contribution to an Eligible Project, up to a Maximum Contribution. The Maximum Contribution shall be the lesser of 40% of the Eligible Project's Eligible Costs or the following amounts (depending on the applicable genre):

- Drama and Comedy: \$250,000
- Lifestyle and Documentary: \$150,000

Major Production Funder

Subject to the Broadcaster committing to a fair-market value licence fee as part of the financing, the Bell Fund will solely decide the amount of its financial contribution to an Eligible Project, up to a Maximum Contribution. The Maximum Contribution shall be the lesser of 40% of the Eligible Project's Eligible Costs or the following amounts (depending on the applicable genre):

- Drama and Comedy: \$250,000
- Lifestyle and Documentary: \$150,000

Coproductions

For audiovisual treaty coproductions, the Maximum Contribution for the Eligible Project will be calculated on the lesser of the Eligible Costs of the Canadian portion of the Eligible Project's global budget and the Eligible Costs of the Canadian portion of the global final costs of the Eligible Project, as certified by Telefilm Canada's Business Affairs and Certification Department.

Nature of Contribution

The Bell Fund funding will be in the form of a non-repayable contribution.

Note: Bell Fund's non-repayable contribution is considered assistance and will impact tax credit calculations.

⁴ Only Shareholders and Key Creative personnel will receive a unique link to complete.

6. ELIGIBLE COSTS

The expectation is that all budget costs will be spent in Canada, and on Canadians. Up to 25% of the budget may be spent on non-Canadian costs provided that the Applicant can establish the need for the non-Canadian costs. Applicant will prepare the Non-Canadian Costs Declaration within the Budget Template for any and all non-Canadian labour services and/or products.

For audiovisual treaty coproductions, eligible costs will apply to the Canadian portion of the global budget.

Please also refer to the [Bell Fund Program Policies](#) for additional information regarding budgeting and financing considerations including Insurance requirements and policies regarding Producers Fees, Corporate Overhead, Cost Reporting and Contingency.

7. TV PRODUCTION PROGRAM - EVALUATION GRID

For the purposes of assessment and evaluation, the jury will rely solely on the written and audiovisual materials initially submitted by the Applicant.

Assessment Criteria	Points	Point Details
Team (30)	16	Track record (experience and/or achievement) of Applicant company and <u>confirmed</u> Key Creative Team (Producer(s), Writer(s), Director(s). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note that there must be evidence of Key Creative personnel attachments to the Application in order to be considered confirmed.
	2	Applicant Company is majority (more than 50%) owned and controlled by individuals who are from a Diverse Community.
	2	Applicant Company is majority (more than 50%) owned and controlled by individuals who identify as women and/or gender diverse.
	2	40% of the cumulative paid positions on the Key Creative Team are held by individuals who are from a Diverse Communities.
	2	40% of the cumulative paid positions on the Key Creative Team are held by individuals that identify as women and/or gender diverse.
	1	Applicant Company is considered emerging, or from regions outside of Toronto (English)/Montreal (French), or OLMC.
	5	Degree to which the Applicant and Key Creative Team are well-positioned to undertake this Project.
Content (44)	29	Excellence of the creative materials and strength of the artistic direction. Creative Materials :Treatment/Bible/Script(s).
	10	Potential to result in critical or commercial success.
	5	Approach to cultural sensitivity with regard to the subject matter and/or intended audience.
Feasibility (25)	15	Budget – Reasonableness and appropriateness of budget relative to the proposed project.
	5	Schedule – Realistic schedule and likelihood of the Project to proceed without delay
	5	Confirmed third-party financing (aside from the required fair-market value licence fee)
Sustainability	1	Is the Applicant undertaking any efforts to measure and reduce its environmental impact?
TOTAL	/100	

8. DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

All documents must be uploaded through the [Bell Fund Application Portal](#). Underlined document(s) have links to template(s).

Documents to be uploaded

1	Project Details Form	Required
2	Proof that Copyright of Project is owned and controlled by Applicant	Required
3	Canadian Broadcaster Licence Agreement (deal memo is sufficient at application stage)	Required
4	Broadcaster Support Form	Required
5	Proof of other financing (if applicable)	If applicable
6	Production Budget (.xls or .xlsx)	Required
7	Creative Materials (1 or 2 scripts and bible/treatment)	Required
8	Production Schedule	Required
9	Credits of Applicant Company (track record of applicant company and production team)	Required
10	List of Key Personnel (indicate whether each individual is confirmed or pending confirmation of attachment to the project)	Required
11	CVs of Key Personnel (experience and achievements)	Required
12	Self-Identification Contact List	Required
13	Coproduction Agreement (if applicable)	If applicable
14	Additional documents (if applicable)	If applicable

Please email info@bellfund.ca for technical assistance.

NOTES:

- No .ZIP files. For multiple documents please upload each file separately. To upload more than one document or for documents not listed, please use “Additional Documents.”
- Keep file names short with no symbols.
- Acceptable file types for upload are: .pdf, .jpeg, .jpg, .doc, .docx, .xls, .csv, .xlsx, .txt, .mov, .avi, .mp4, .wmv, .png, .ppt, .pptx, .tif
- Do NOT email documents.