



# 2025 SLATE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

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# ABOUT THE BELL FUND

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## 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 \$300 million in financial contributions from Bell TV to support Canadian 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 of Directors (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-deserving Community such as Black, racialized, women and gender-diverse, 2SLGBTQIA+, persons with disabilities, regional and Official Language Minority Community (OLMC), and/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 and respect the guiding principles and best practices set out in:

- the Indigenous Screen Office [On-Screen Protocols & Pathways: A Media Production Guide](#);
- the Black Screen Office [Being Seen: Directives for Creating Authentic and Inclusive Content](#); and
- Reelworld [#HerFrameMatters Protocol Guidelines](#).

# INTERPRETATION AND OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

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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 (also see Program Policies for definitions).

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](http://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 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 current Projects;
- 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**

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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.

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.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

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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. Applicants and production teams are encouraged to refer to resources such as the [Producing for the Planet – Action Guide](#), [Reel Green](#), [Rolling Green](#), and [Ontario Green Screen](#).

# ACCESSIBILITY

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## 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, Applicants that have accessibility needs, face accessibility barriers, or require accommodations may request an alternative process or format for submitting an application, or funds (up to \$500 per application) towards service providers to assist with your application.

Services may include, but are not limited to, assistance in creating an account and navigating the Online Application Portal or the Bell Fund self-identification data collection portal; and/or transcribing, editing, and translating 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](mailto: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 made available with Closed Captioning and Described Video.

# SLATE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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The Slate Development Program is a selective program that supports the development of a slate of projects, developed by Canadian production companies, by offering financial support for the development of original intellectual property (“IP”). Applications will be assessed on the potential of the projects and the opportunity for the slate to advance the applicant company. Successful applicants will have the flexibility to allocate the funds between their slate of projects in response to market needs and opportunities (subject to Bell Fund consideration).

## 2. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

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Eligible Applicants to the Slate Development Program will be either a:

1. “Canadian Independent Production Company” - Is a for-profit (i.e., a taxable Canadian corporation, within the meaning of the Canada 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 15% of the Slate Development Program Funding.

An Applicant comprised of and/or exercising common control over several companies, is only entitled to one application per deadline.

The Applicant does not have any open Bell Fund supported Slate(s) (all requirements have been delivered). Applicants must be in good standing with the Bell Fund.

### 3. ELIGIBLE SLATE

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Eligible Slates must:

1. Include three (3) projects.
2. Be in an Eligible Genre (defined below).
3. Include at least one series.
4. Include Projects that are intended to qualify for CRTC or Canadian Audio–Visual Certification Office (CAVCO) program certification with a minimum of 6 out of 10 points (unless otherwise stated in guidelines or regulations).
5. Conform to the Canadian Association of Broadcasters' (CAB) code of ethics as well as the CRTC programming standards including but not limited to sex-role portrayals and violence.
6. The proposed projects must be new works. (i.e. not a subsequent season).
7. Be comprised of linear audiovisual projects. (i.e. not interactive digital media).
8. Include at least one (1) signed [Market Interest Slate Support Form](#) for at least one (1) of the projects in the Slate.
9. Not include projects that already received Bell Fund development support. The Bell Fund will only support one (1) phase of development per project.
10. Include Projects where the Applicant already holds any rights required to develop the Projects included in the Application for a minimum of 24 months from the notification of funding.
11. Development of the Slate projects is to be completed within 18 months of the notification of funding.

#### Eligible Genres

The following [CRTC program categories](#) will be considered Eligible Genres of Projects in the Slate Development Program (with additional consideration below):

- Category 2b) Long-form documentary (and short-form documentary series)
- Category 5a) Formal Education & Pre-school
- Category 5b) Informal Education/Recreation & Leisure
- Category 7 Drama and Comedy
- Category 11(a) General entertainment and human interest (subject to Bell Fund approval and not including adult programming or fundraising)\*
- Category 11(b) Reality television

Eligibility will be determined at the sole discretion of the Bell Fund.



If a one-off project (e.g. film and/or documentary) is included in a Slate application, it must be intended for broadcast and not only intended for theatrical or home video release. This project must be included on a [Slate Market Interest Support Form](#) signed by a CRTC-licensed programming undertaking in order to be eligible.

## Ineligible Genres

The following [CRTC program categories](#) will be considered Ineligible Genres of Projects in the Slate Development Program (with additional consideration below):

- Category 1 News
- Category 2a) Analysis and Interpretation
- Category 3 Reporting & Actualities
- Category 4 Religion
- Category 6 Sports
- Category 8a) Music and dance
- Category 8b) Music video clips
- Category 8c) Music video programs
- Category 9 Variety
- Category 10 Game shows
- Category 12 Interstitials
- Category 13 Public service announcements
- Category 14 Infomercials, promotional and corporate videos
- Category 15 Filler programming
- Vlogs, User-Generated Content, Product Reviews, Unboxing, Tutorials, How-to, Streaming and/or gaming
- Licensed Formats that are not Canadian-originated IP
- Audio or Video Podcasts
- Broadcaster in-house programming
- Short Films and projects intended solely for theatrical release or non-broadcast
- \*Adult Programming
- Telethons and Fundraising

## Market Interest

In a review of the Bell Fund Slate Program between 2018-2024, virtually all projects that proceeded to greenlight were associated with a Canadian Broadcaster. Accordingly, as of 2025, in order to be eligible, Applications must include at least one (1) signed Market Interest Slate Support Form completed by either:

- a. A CRTC-licensed broadcaster, programming undertaking, or online undertaking; or
- b. A Third-party Distributor with a track-record of distribution of similar Canadian programs, making a cash contribution to the development of the project(s). In the case of Distributor Market Interest, an agreement is also required at the time of application; or

- c. An international broadcaster or platform or non-CRTC-licensed Canadian platform<sup>1</sup>, making a cash contribution to the development of the project(s). In the case of an international broadcaster or platform Market Interest, an agreement is also required at the time of application.

\*For clarification:

If the application is seeking eligibility based on Market Interest Support from an international broadcaster or platform or non-CRTC-licensed Canadian platform, that service must be a Third-party, and either included on the [List of Acceptable Online Services pursuant to CAVCO Public Notice 2017-01](#); or meet the following criteria:

- The broadcaster/platform content is available in English, French or Indigenous languages;
- The broadcaster/platform features premium quality entertainment content;
- The broadcaster/platform has been active for at least 12 months;
- New content is regularly posted or aired on the broadcaster/platform;
- For platforms, the platform has at least 30,000 (English) or 15,000 (French) subscribers and has total views of at least 300,000 (English) or 150,000 (French).

While other elements of market interest may not enable eligibility and are not required, they will be considered and rewarded as part of the evaluation process.

## 4. DEADLINES AND APPLICATION PROCESS

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

### Important Dates

Application Portal Opens	February 27, 2025
<b>PROGRAM DEADLINE: Application Portal Closes</b>	<b>April 1, 2025 (7pm ET)</b>

### Number of Applications

An Applicant may submit a maximum of one (1) application per Deadline.

Projects not approved from previous Slate Development Program deadlines may only apply once more with the same project.

Projects that were previously funded through Bell Fund Slate Development are not eligible for additional development support.

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<sup>1</sup> In no case will Community Channels trigger eligibility for the Slate Program

## **Application Assessment**

Projects in the Slate Development Program 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 below).

Funding decisions are made by the Board and are final. It is the intent that funding decisions will be announced by the end of June 2025.

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

Commencing in 2025, the Bell Fund has committed that it will allocate at least 10% of its total budget to an envelope dedicated to OLMC producers (in either official language) and producers from diverse communities (as defined by the CRTC). A minimum of 5% to OLMC and 5% to diverse communities.

## Self-identification Data Collection Process

To further the commitments established in the Bell Fund 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. The self-identification data collection questionnaire allows individuals to disclose their demographic information on a voluntary basis, confidentially and securely to the Bell Fund.

Using a questionnaire based on the Canada Media Fund PERSONA-ID data collection system, 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 the guiding principles.
- Consider any changes that may be required to the programs to meet objectives; and
- 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 Data Code (SID-code) for each Company Owner (including Shareholders).
2. To obtain a SID-code, all Company Owners must create an account on the [Bell Fund Self-Identification Data Collection Portal](#) and complete a confidential online questionnaire. The disclosure of any individual identity data is voluntary and will be kept confidential (“I prefer not to answer” is an option within the questions).
3. Applicants will be required to enter the SID-codes into the Self-Identification Data Code List. Evaluators will only consider materials submitted by the deadline. If an SID-code is not included as part of the application, the information may not be included in the processing of the application.

Please consult the [Self-Identification Data Collection Process Webpage](#) for additional information.

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<sup>2</sup> Regional defined as 150 kilometers outside of Toronto (English-language projects) and Montreal (French-language projects).

## 5. FUNDING CONTRIBUTION

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### Amount of Contribution

The Bell Fund will solely decide the amount of its financial contribution to the Slate of Eligible Projects, up to a Maximum Contribution. The Maximum Contribution shall be \$75,000 for a Slate.

### Coproductions and Coventures

Projects intended to be Treaty Coproductions and/or majority Canadian-owned Coventures may be considered as part of the Slate of projects. Treaty Coproductions as determined by Telefilm and Coventures as determined by the CRTC.

### Nature of Contribution

The Bell Fund funding will be in the form of a Repayable Development Advance.

### Repayment of the Development Advance

Repayment of the Development Advance will be required when the following occurs for any project in the Slate. Repayment is required based on the earlier of:

- a project on the Slate proceeds with any Transfer of Rights; or
- the First Day of Principal Photography (or Key Animation).

Repayment will be as follows:

- 50% of the Slate Advance, repayable on the first project (\$37,500);
- 25% repayable on the second project (\$18,750); and
- 25% repayable on the third project (\$18,750).

*e.g. Bell Fund supports Project X, Y and Z with a total \$75,000 development advance. When any of Project X, Y or Z goes to camera, the above amount is repayable to the Bell Fund on the First Day of Principal Photography (or Key Animation) or Transfer of Rights.*

## 6. ELIGIBLE COSTS

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Commencing in 2025, the Bell Fund will allow a more flexible approach to development costs. Successful Applicants will determine the allocation of development funds across its slate of projects, as it deems appropriate subject to final review by the Bell Fund and the following restrictions:

1. Producer Fees and Corporate Overhead may each not exceed 10% (i.e. 10% Producer Fees and 10% Corporate Overhead) of the total costs (i.e. not more than \$15,000.00 combined).
2. Costs for travel and/or market attendance may not exceed 15% of the total costs (i.e. not more than \$11,250.00).
3. Option Fees are not an Eligible Cost. It is expected that the Applicant has secured the necessary rights in order to develop, produce and exploit the projects in their Slate. The Applicant must already hold any rights required to develop projects included in the Application for a minimum of 24 months from the notification of funding.
4. Legal and accounting costs may not exceed 10% of the total costs (i.e. not more than \$7,500.00).

The expectation is that the majority of 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.

Please also refer to the [Bell Fund Program Policies](#) for additional information regarding budgeting and financing considerations including Insurance requirements.

Applicants will be expected to report on Related Parties and non-Canadian costs as part of final reporting documents.

NOTE: Successful Applicants may be permitted to add additional projects to their Slate and allocate funds to the development of these additional projects with approval by the Bell Fund.

## 7. SLATE DEVELOPMENT 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 (34)	2	Applicant Company is majority (51% or more) owned and controlled by individuals who are from a Diverse Community.
	2	Applicant Company is majority (51% or more) owned and controlled by individuals who identify as women and/or gender diverse.
	2	Applicant Company is majority (51% or more) owned and controlled by individuals who identify as OLMC.
	1	Applicant Company is considered emerging, or from a region outside of Toronto (English)/Montreal (French).
	12	Confirmed Key Creatives (e.g. Producer, Writer, Story Editor, Mentor, etc.) have a track record required to deliver the proposed development. <i>(4 points per project)</i>
	15	The company/team are well-positioned to undertake the projects (they have a relationship to the proposed content). <i>(5 points per project)</i>
Feasibility (27)	12	The Applicant has clearly identified the intended audience and potential market partner(s) for each project. <i>(4 points per project)</i>
	15	The Applicant has identified an appropriate development plan for each project. <i>(5 points per project)</i>
Potential for Success (27)	12	Confirmed Market Interest beyond the minimum required for eligibility (e.g. funding, confirmed market interest from other parties, other contributions to the Slate Development, confirmed labs, accelerators, etc.) <i>(4 points per project)</i>
	15	Likelihood that the project will proceed to Greenlight. Is there a market for this project considering genre, format, authorial voice, packaging, etc.? <i>(5 points per project)</i>
Slate Impact (10)	10	Potential impact to advance the company through Slate support.
Sustainability (2)	2	Is the Applicant undertaking any efforts to measure and reduce its environmental impact? Will this be factored into development activities and the development of projects?
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>/100</b>	



## 8. DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

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

### Documents to be uploaded:

1	<a href="#">Project Details Form</a>	<b>Required</b>
2	Proof that the producer has the rights required to develop, produce and exploit the Projects. Shopping Agreements are not acceptable.	<b>Required x 3</b>
3	Signed and completed <a href="#">Slate Market Interest Form(s)</a> . Minimum of one (1).	<b>Required</b>
4	Distributor and/or international broadcaster/platform agreement (if applicable)	<b>If applicable</b>
5	Proof of other financing (if applicable)	<b>If applicable</b>
6	Credits and/or CVs for confirmed key creatives (if applicable)	<b>If applicable</b>
7	Credits of Applicant Company	<b>Required</b>
8	Certificate of Incorporation of Applicant	<b>Required</b>
9	Codevelopment agreement (if applicable)	<b>If applicable</b>
10	Summaries, outlines, or other available creative materials for each project submitted	<b>Required</b>
11	<a href="#">Bell Fund Development Self-ID Code List</a>	<b>Required</b>
12	Additional documents	<b>If applicable</b>

Please email [info@bellfund.ca](mailto: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