



**2025 TV PRODUCTION PROGRAM  
GUIDELINES**

**\*updated January 24, 2025**

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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.

# TV PRODUCTION PROGRAM

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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The Bell Fund TV Production Program supports the production of high-quality, market-driven, Canadian series in eligible genres.

There are two streams within this program:

1. Major Production Funder
2. Selective

Funding is allocated as a function of a Broadcasters' Canadian Programming Expenditure ("CPE") (excluding news and sports) in accordance with the CRTC 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 Funder<sup>1</sup> and other Canadian private and public broadcasters.

Applications will be assessed on the team, content, feasibility and the potential for market success.

## 2. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

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Eligible Applicants to the TV 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 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 25% of the TV Production Program funding.

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<sup>1</sup> Defined in the [Bell Fund Program Policies](#)

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

### **3. ELIGIBLE PROJECT**

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

1. Include episodes that average a minimum of half-hour based on standard broadcast running times (i.e. not short-form).
2. The series must include:
  - A minimum of six (6) episodes with an exception for the following
  - Fiction series with production budgets of \$500,000 per hour or more require a minimum of four (4) episodes;
  - Documentary series with production budgets of \$500,000 per hour or more 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. Rights are owned and meaningfully developed by Canadians and creative and financial control remains with the Canadian producer throughout the production and postproduction. 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 programming standards including but not limited to sex-role portrayals and television violence.
7. Must have confirmed Market Interest (see below).



## Eligible Genres

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

- Category 2b) Long-form documentary
- Category 5b) Informal Education/Recreation & Leisure
- Category 7 Drama and Comedy (except 7d and 7e if intended for children and youth)
- Category 11(b) Reality television

For Bell Fund eligibility, only Canadian-originated IP will be considered. Eligibility will be considered at the sole discretion of the Bell Fund.

## Ineligible Genres\*

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

- Licensed formats (which are not Canadian-originated)
- Projects that are primarily intended for children and youth (family programming is eligible)
- Category 1 News
- Category 2a) Analysis and Interpretation
- Category 3 Reporting & Actualities
- Category 4 Religion
- Category 5a) Formal Education & Pre-school
- Category 6 Sports
- Category 7d) Theatrical feature films aired on television
- Category 7e) Animated television programs and films (if primarily intended for children and youth)
- Category 8a) Music and dance
- Category 8b) Music video clips
- Category 8c) Music video programs
- Category 9 Variety
- Category 10 Game shows
- \*Category 11(a) General entertainment and human interest
- Category 12 Interstitials
- Category 13 Public service announcements
- Category 14 Infomercials, promotional and corporate videos
- Category 15 Filler programming
- Broadcaster in-house programming
- Telethons and fundraising

\*updated January 24, 2025

## 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.

Canadian Broadcasters (including Broadcasting Groups as determined by the CRTC) may support a maximum of 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.

## 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

#### TV Selective

Application Portal Opens	March 6, 2025
DEADLINE: Application Portal Closes	April 15, 2025 (7pm ET)

#### Major Production Funder

Application Portal Opens	March 6, 2025
Program Opens	April 16, 2025
DEADLINE: Application Portal Closes	December 2, 2025 (7pm ET)

## **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. 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 of Directors for consideration and final selection using the Evaluation Grid (see section 7 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-seeking community such as Black, racialized, women and gender-diverse, 2SLGBTQIA+, persons with disabilities, regional<sup>2</sup> and Official Language Minority Community (OLMC), 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-ID 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. Bell Fund Self-ID allows individuals to disclose their demographic information on a voluntary basis, confidentially and securely to the Bell Fund.

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

Using a questionnaire based on the Canada Media Fund PERSONA-ID 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 the 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 Data Code (SID-code) for each Company Owner (including Shareholders) and Key Creative Personnel who are confirmed as part of the Project.
  2. To obtain a SID-code, all Company Owners and Key Creatives 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.
  4. Please consult the Self-Identification Data Collection Process Webpage for additional information.

## **5. FUNDING CONTRIBUTION**

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### **Amount of Contribution**

#### **TV Selective**

Subject to the Broadcaster committing to a fair-market value cash 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 Costs or the following amounts (depending on the applicable genre):

- Scripted (e.g. drama, comedy): \$250,000; or
- Unscripted (e.g. documentary, lifestyle, reality): \$150,000.

#### **Major Production Funder**

Subject to the Broadcaster committing to a fair-market value cash licence fee as part of the financing, the MPF Broadcaster 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 Costs or the following amounts (depending on the applicable genre):

- Scripted (e.g. drama, comedy): \$250,000; or

- Unscripted (e.g. documentary, lifestyle, reality): \$150,000.

## Coproductions and Coventures

For Treaty Coproductions and/or majority Canadian-owned Coventures, 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 global budget and the Eligible Costs of the Canadian portion of the global final costs of the Eligible Project, as certified by Telefilm Canada Business Affairs and Certification Department. Treaty Coproductions as determined by Telefilm and Coventures as determined by the CRTC.

## Nature of Contribution

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

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

## 6. ELIGIBLE COSTS

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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. 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 and coventures, 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.

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

## 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
<b>Team (32)</b>	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"> <li>Note that there must be evidence of Key Creative personnel attachments to the Application in order to be considered confirmed.</li> </ul>
	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	40% of the cumulative paid positions on the Key Creative Team are held by individuals who are from 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.
	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 regions outside of Toronto (English)/Montreal (French)
	5	Degree to which the Applicant and Key Creative Team are well-positioned to undertake this Project. (relationship to the Project)
<b>Content (35)</b>	20	Excellence of creative materials. Quality and strength. 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.
<b>Feasibility (30)</b>	10	Budget – Reasonableness and appropriateness of budget relative to the proposed project.
	10	Schedule – Realistic schedule and likelihood of the Project to proceed without delay.
	10	Confirmed third-party financing (aside from the required fair-market value licence fee)
<b>Sustainability (3)</b>	3	How effective will the Applicant Sustainability Plan be in advancing ecoresponsibility?
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>/100</b>	

## 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	<a href="#">Project Details Form</a>	<b>Required</b>
2	Proof that copyright of Project is owned and controlled by Applicant	<b>Required</b>
3	Canadian Broadcaster Licence Agreement (deal memo is sufficient at application stage)	<b>Required</b>
4	2025 TV Production Program <a href="#">Broadcaster Support Form</a>	<b>Required</b>
5	Proof of other financing (if applicable)	<b>If applicable</b>
6	Production Budget (.xls or .xlsx)	<b>Required</b>
7	<a href="#">Related Party Transactions Form</a> (including declaration of Canadian costs)	<b>Required</b>
8	Creative Materials that best represent the project (e.g. outlines, scripts, bible, link to episode, etc.)	<b>Required</b>
9	Production Schedule	<b>Required</b>
10	Credits of Applicant Company (applicant company and production team)	<b>Required</b>
11	List of Confirmed Key Personnel	<b>Required</b>
12	CVs of Confirmed Key Personnel (experience and achievements)	<b>Required</b>
13	<a href="#">Bell Fund Self-Identification Production Code List</a>	<b>Required</b>
14	Sustainability Plan (please use the <a href="#">Producing for the Planet</a> template)	<b>Required</b>
15	Coproduction Agreement (if applicable)	<b>If applicable</b>
16	Additional documents (if applicable)	<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.