



# SLATE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM GUIDELINES 2026

Please note that application documents and templates will be made available in early 2026. This document will be updated with links once available.

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# 1. ABOUT THE BELL FUND

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## 1.1. Mission

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

## 1.2. 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 and online 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.

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. In 2025, the Fund became eligible to receive contributions from Online Undertakings.

## 1.3. 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).

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 to 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](#).

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.

## 2. INTERPRETATION AND OTHER 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.

### 2.1. Interpretation

The Bell Fund 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 Bell Fund decisions are final.

All Applicants must 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.

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.

### 2.2. 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 additional documentation and information to conduct an assessment and evaluation. For the purposes of assessment and evaluation, the Bell Fund

reserves the right to rely solely on the written and audiovisual materials initially submitted by the Applicant.

In the event of a potential material change to a Project, it is the responsibility of the Applicant to inform and seek approval of the Bell Fund for such change and to update such documentation and information as required after an approved material change.

### **2.3. Failure to Comply**

If an Applicant fails to comply with these Guidelines, as determined by the Bell Fund, 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.

### **2.4. 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.

### **2.5. Program Policies**

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

## 3. 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.

### 3.1. Environmental Sustainability

Bell Fund encourages all Applicants to implement environmentally sustainable practices including the use of clean technologies and reduced use of unsustainable resources, in the development, production and exploitation of projects. Applicants and production teams are encouraged to refer to resources such as:

- [Producing for the Planet](#);
- [Reel Green](#);
- [Rolling Green](#); and
- [Ontario Green Screen](#).

### 3.2. 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.

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 provider to assist with an Application.

Services may include, but are not limited to, assistance in creating an account and navigating the Online 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.

### **3.3. Accessible Content**

The Bell Fund requires that all projects funded in production are made available with Closed Captioning and Described Video.

## **4. SLATE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM 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 intellectual property (“IP”).

Applications will be assessed on the potential of the projects and the opportunity for the slate to advance the Applicant Company (see Section 12 for Assessment Criteria). Successful Applicants will have the flexibility to allocate the funds between their slate of projects in response to market needs and opportunities.

## **5. ELIGIBILITY**

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### **5.1. Eligible Applicants**

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

- a. “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
- b. “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.

The Applicant and related companies do not have any open Bell Fund supported Slate(s) (all requirements have been delivered).

Eligible Applicants must also be in good standing with the Bell Fund.

Applicants are encouraged to watch the [Slate Development Program Webinar](#) prior to applying.

## **5.2. Eligible Slate Application**

Eligible Slate Applications must:

- a. Include three (3) projects.
- b. Only include Projects in an Eligible Genre (defined in Section 5.3.).
- c. Include at least one (1) series.
- d. 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).
- e. 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.
- f. Include Projects that are new audiovisual works. (i.e. not a subsequent season).
- g. Be comprised of linear audiovisual projects. (i.e. not interactive digital media).
- h. Include at least one (1) signed Market Interest Support Form for each of at least two (2) Projects (i.e. include a minimum of two (2) signed Market Interest Support Forms).
- i. If including one (1) or more One-off projects (e.g. a film and/or documentary), each One-off project is supported by a CRTC-licensed/registered programming undertaking and must include a signed Market Interest Support Form for each One-off Project (i.e. a signed Market Interest Support Form for each One-off Project).
- j. Not include projects that already received Bell Fund development support. The Bell Fund will only support one (1) phase of development per Project.

- k. Include Projects where the Applicant holds (owns or controls) the rights required to develop the Projects included in the Application for a minimum of 24 months from the notification of funding.
- l. Development of the Slate projects is to be completed within 18 months of the notification of funding. Final reporting is to be completed within 24 months of the notification of funding.

### **5.3. 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.

### **5.4. 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
- Interactive Digital Media

## 6. MARKET INTEREST

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Applications must include at least two (2)<sup>1</sup> signed Market Interest Slate Support Forms 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 (not an eligible Market Interest for One-off projects); or
- c. An international broadcaster or platform or non-CRTC-licensed Canadian platform<sup>2</sup>, making a cash contribution to the development of the project(s). In the case of an international broadcaster or platform Market Interest or non-CRTC-licensed Canadian platform, an

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<sup>1</sup> Note the additional requirement for 'One-off' Projects.

<sup>2</sup> In no case will Community Channels trigger eligibility for the Slate Development Program. Exceptions may be made for Community Channels in the North (please contact the Bell Fund to confirm).

agreement is also required at the time of application (not an eligible Market Interest for One-off projects.)

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:

- i. The broadcaster/platform content is available in English, French or Indigenous languages;
- ii. The broadcaster/platform features premium quality entertainment content;
- iii. The broadcaster/platform has been active for at least 12 months;
- iv. New content is regularly posted or aired on the broadcaster/platform;
- v. 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).

## 7. DEADLINES AND APPLICATION PROCESS

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All Applications must be submitted through the Bell Fund Online Portal. Documents must be current and relevant to this application deadline.

### 7.1. Important Dates

The Online Portal typically opens four (4) weeks prior to the Deadline.

Program Deadline:	June 2, 2026 (7pm ET)
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### 7.2. Number of Applications per Applicant

An Applicant, including those comprised of more than one (1) company exercising common control over several companies (30% or more), is entitled to submit only one (1) application per deadline.

Projects not approved from previous Slate application may only be included once more as part of a new Slate application.

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

### **7.3. 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. Using the Evaluation Grid (see Section 13), recommendations from this jury will be made to the Board for consideration and final selection.

Funding decisions are made by the Board and are final. It is the intent that funding decisions will be announced 10-12 weeks following the Application deadline.

## **8. SELF-IDENTIFICATION DATA COLLECTION PROCESS**

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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.

## 9. FUNDING CONTRIBUTION

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### 9.1. 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.

### 9.2. 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.

### 9.3. Nature of Contribution

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

### 9.4. 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. a project on the Slate proceeds with any Transfer of Rights to an unrelated party; or
- b. 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).

For example, 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.

## 10. ELIGIBLE COSTS

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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:

- 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).
- Costs for travel and/or market attendance may not exceed 15% of the total costs (i.e. not more than \$11,250.00).
- 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. (10-12 weeks after the application deadline).
- 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.

## 11. ADDITIONAL PROJECTS

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



## 12. 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) and not OLMC.
	12	Confirmed key creatives (e.g. Producer, Writer, Story Editor, Mentor) have a track record required to deliver the proposed development. <u>4 points per project</u>
	15	The company and team are well-positioned to undertake the projects (e.g. they have a relationship to the proposed content). <u>5 points per project</u>
FEASIBILITY (27)	12	The Applicant has clearly identified the intended audience and potential market partner(s) for each project. <u>4 points per project</u>
	15	The Applicant has identified an appropriate development plan for each project. <u>5 points per project</u>

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.). <u>4 points per project</u>
	15	Likelihood that the project will proceed to Greenlight. Is there a market for this project considering genre, format, authorial voice, packaging, etc.? <u>5 points per project</u>
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>	

## 13. DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

All documents must be uploaded through the [Online Application Portal](#). Underlined documents have links to templates. **Templates and forms will be available in early 2026.**

#	Document Name	
1	<u>Project Details Form</u>	Required
2	<u>Signed Rights Attestation Form for each Project</u>	Required, for each project
3	<u>Minimum of two (2) signed and completed Slate Market Interest Forms.</u> (If the Application includes One-off Projects refer to Section 6 above to ensure the correct Market Interest.)	Required
4	Agreement with distributor and/or broadcaster/platform	If applicable
5	Proof of other financing	If applicable
6	Credits and/or CVs for confirmed key creatives	If applicable
7	Credits of Applicant Company	Required
8	Articles of Incorporation of Applicant	Required
9	Summaries, outlines, or other available creative materials for each project submitted	Required, for each project
10	<u>Bell Fund Development Self-ID Code List</u>	Required
11	Codevelopment agreement(s)	If applicable
12	Additional documents	If applicable

- Keep file names short and only include letters and numbers.
- No .ZIP files. For multiple documents please upload each file separately. For documents not listed, please use “Additional Documents.”
- Acceptable file types for upload are: .pdf, .jpeg, .jpg, .doc, .docx, .xls, .csv, .xlsx, .txt, .mov, .avi, .mp4, .wmv, .png, .ppt, .pptx, .tif
- Please email [info@bellfund.ca](mailto:info@bellfund.ca) for technical assistance.