

Essential Information Guide

Development Program

APPLICABLE AS OF JUNE 9, 2026

Ce document est également disponible en français

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1 General Questions

1. What are the types of funding available under the Development Program?

There are 2 types of funding streams in this program:

- **Prequalified Stream:** Automatic development funding for 150 eligible Canadian companies with an Organization Performance Score ranking among the highest ones, subject to regional and linguistic distribution. Details on how to access the Prequalified Stream are available in the [Access to the Prequalified Stream and Calculation Details](#) document.
- **Selective Streams:** Selective funding for eligible Canadian companies. There are three selective streams: the General Stream, the Indigenous Stream, and the Stream for Black People and People of Colour. **Note that the General Stream will be discontinued as of fiscal 2027-2028 and that the Indigenous Stream and the Stream for Black People and People of Colour will be reviewed in collaboration with our EDIA partners.**

In addition to these streams, 2 additional funding mechanisms have been put in place to amplify projects that meet Telefilm's strategic objectives:

- **Springboard Initiative:** Projects that were unsuccessful under the Production Program but that were ranked highly or that meet Telefilm's corporate objectives may be invited to apply for funding under the Development Program to strengthen their project.
- **Animation Initiative:** Selective funding granting an additional funding amount to animation projects submitted in the Prequalified or Selective Streams.

2. Can I apply to different streams?

An applicant may only **apply to one stream** even if it is eligible to more than one. Applicants benefiting from the Springboard Initiative may submit an additional application provided they are applying with a different project than the project submitted to the Springboard initiative.

Note: It is not possible to switch streams after an application is submitted.

3. If my portfolio is funded, what percentage of a project's development budget will Telefilm contribute?

Subject to the maximum amount of financing your company is eligible for, Telefilm's financial participation can cover up to 100% of the budget of each project included in your portfolio.

4. Does Telefilm fund eligible costs incurred prior to submission of the funding application?

Yes. Costs incurred since the beginning of the calendar year are eligible.

5. Is there a standard development budget which lists which costs are eligible at which phase?

No. Telefilm has moved away from a standard budget model. The guidelines speak of eligible costs and some parameters for a few of them, but the applicant can tailor applicable costs depending on the state of advancement, creative needs, and particularities of the project.

A final cost report will be required, and Telefilm could question some costs to make sure they meet the program's objectives and spirit and intent. Telefilm reserves the right to decline some costs that are deemed unreasonable or not in line with the program's objectives.

6. Does every project in my development portfolio with Telefilm need to be completed and delivered before I can apply again?

Applicants having an uncompleted development project under contract with Telefilm may not submit another application for the **same** project nor include it in a new portfolio submission. However, the entire portfolio does not have to be completed before applying for an additional phase of a previously funded project.

7. What development phase can I apply for under this program?

You can apply for any phase from first draft through to packaging. Note that a project may only be funded for Development **four times**, and that the cumulative amount must be repaid on the earlier of the first day of principal photography or the sale/transfer/assignment of the script.

8. The guidelines state that a project can receive funding a maximum of 4 times under the Program. Does that apply to projects funded under the Prequalified Stream as well?

Yes. It applies to all projects regardless of the stream under which they were funded including funding received under the Springboard Initiative. Note however that top ups received under the Animation Initiative do not count as an additional round of funding.

9. I wish to apply for multi-phase funding. Is that possible?

Yes. However, you must be able to demonstrate that the phases can be completed within the term of your option agreement.

10. What is the “packaging” phase of a project?

The packaging stage involves the inclusion of market elements, for example the commitment of a director and a distributor (depending on the production budget level envisioned), attaching a casting agent and/or cast, the development of a business and financing plan as well as a preliminary theatrical marketing plan, including target audience(s), commercial potential and a preliminary theatrical release strategy. Subsequent drafts of a screenplay may also be included in this phase.

11. Am I required to have a director and a distributor attached to my project to apply for the packaging phase?

A commitment from a director is mandatory with the exception of packaging applications submitted to the Springboard Initiative.

A commitment from a distributor is not required but having one attached would be considered in the evaluation of the application.

12. Can I have a foreign co-writer attached to my project if it is intended to be an international coproduction?

No. At the development stage, all writers must be Canadian citizens or permanent residents at the time the first draft of the script was written.

13. Are co-development projects allowed?

Yes but Telefilm will only sign its funding agreement with the main production company who will be solely responsible for filling out all the obligations set out in Telefilm’s agreement. Applicants must make sure that the project continues to meet the eligibility requirements set out in the guidelines notably in terms of Canadian content.

14. What are my obligations in terms of repayment of the development advance if my rights have expired or revert to the writer?

The contract signed with Telefilm remains valid and the development advance will have to be reimbursed in accordance with the terms of the contract. If the project is re-submitted for Development funding with a new producer, the advance

must still be repaid—either by the previous producer, or by the new producer as a condition of receiving new funding for the project.

15. Is it mandatory to have a story consultant or a script editor?

No. However, Telefilm encourages teams to collaborate with a story consultant or a script editor who is independent from the applicant.

16. If the story consultant or script editor of a project is also the producer or an employee of the applicant, will their fee be considered as an eligible cost?

No. To be considered as an eligible cost, the story consultant or script editor must be independent from the applicant. They cannot be the producer, a related party to the producer or an employee of the applicant.

2 Questions Regarding the Prequalified Stream

17. How can I access the Prequalified Stream and how will my Organization Performance Score be calculated?

Access to the Prequalified Stream is based on 2 elements: 1) a demonstration of recent activity in the past 4 years and 2) calculation of an Organization's Performance Score over the past 6 years. Eligible organizations with the **top 150 highest Organization Performance Scores**, subject to regional and linguistic splits, will be eligible to the Prequalified Stream.

Details on the Prequalified Stream can be found in the [Access to the Prequalified Stream and Calculation Details](#) document.

18. How was the designated festival list established for the Prequalified Stream?

The list was established through a comprehensive review of existing lists used across our programs, with the objective of ensuring overall coherence and alignment.

Festivals and events were selected based on their demonstrated impact on the industry. Key criteria included their level of international recognition, their contribution to regional diversity, and their track record in showcasing and supporting Canadian films.

19. If I had a project that was selected at a designated festival outside the four-year eligibility period but had a theatrical release within the past four years, am I meeting the recent activity requirement of the Prequalified Stream?

Yes. To meet the recent activity requirement, a project must **either** have been theatrically released in Canada in the past 4 years or had a selection or award at a designated festival during that period, not necessarily both.

20. When calculating the Performance Score of my project, what happens if that project won a prize at a designated festival outside of the six-year reference period but had a theatrical release and generated sales within that period?

Your project will only be able to generate a commercial score since the prize won at a designated festival is outside of the six-year reference period.

21. If I meet the recent activity eligibility criteria for the Prequalified Stream and have a score, does that mean I automatically qualify for prequalified funding?

No. Only eligible companies with an Organization Performance Score ranking among the **top 150** (subject to regional and linguistic distribution) will qualify for the Prequalified Stream.

22. I want to review my production company's filmography and Performance Score prior to the opening of the program to make sure it is accurate. How do I do that?

Applicants can view their filmography and Performance Score directly in Dialogue by clicking on the "My Organizations" record and then selecting the "Performance Score" or "Filmography" tabs.

Applicants are responsible for reviewing their company's information and filmography in [Dialogue](#) and ensuring that the information is current and accurate at all times. This is the information that Telefilm relies on to determine a project's and company's Performance Score, as well as companies' eligibility to the Prequalified Stream.

Requests for adjustments to gross sales reports will only be taken into consideration for the following fiscal year.

For fiscal 2026-2027, Telefilm will exceptionally grant a 2-week period to review **festival selections and awards**. To inform us of selections/awards at designated festivals in the past 6 years that do not appear in the Organization Performance Score tab in Dialogue, please fill out the form available on our website before **June 23rd, 2026**. No requests for adjustment

made after that date will be considered.

23. My project was funded by Telefilm under the Talent to Watch Program, and I do not see it in my company's filmography on Dialogue, or the information is not accurate. How do I update it?

If you have produced a project that was funded under the Talent to Watch Program and released in theatres in the past 6 years, but never had the chance to report the gross sales to Telefilm, a designated representative for your company should reach out to Margaret Paul (Margaret.paul@telefilm.ca) in order to fill out the Gross Sales Report for next year.

Requests for adjustments, corrections or revisions made after April 1, will only be taken into consideration for the following fiscal.

24. My project was funded by Telefilm in a production program and was released digitally due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Can it count towards my organization's Performance Score?

Yes, provided that your organization meets the recent activity criteria of the Prequalified stream and that:

- your project was released between March 1, 2020, and June 30, 2022 by a third-party distributor or by a Telefilm-approved distributor;
- it received funding under Telefilm's Marketing Program; and
- the digital release was authorized by Telefilm due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

25. How do I add a film that was produced without Telefilm funding to my filmography in Dialogue?

Only films financed by Telefilm under the Production Program, the Theatrical Documentary Program, or the Talent to Watch Program can be added to the filmography in [Dialogue](#).

26. What is the minimum Organization Performance Score required to be eligible to the Prequalified Stream?

The minimum Organization Performance Score required in order to be eligible to the Prequalified Stream may vary by region and by linguistic market. Minimum requirements for this fiscal will be made available on the program's [webpage](#) prior to the program opening. All prequalified applicants will be notified of their eligibility status and the amount of funding they can receive ahead of the opening of the Program.

27. If my company is eligible to the Prequalified Stream, how many projects may I include in my portfolio and what is the maximum funding per project?

Tier A applicants can include up to 3 projects per application for a maximum funding of \$100,000, while Tier B applicants can include up to 2 projects per application for a maximum funding of \$60,000.

Applicants can choose to include only 1 project in their portfolio and request the total prequalified amount for such project, provided that the project's development budget is equal to or higher than the requested amount.

All funds received under the Development Program must be repaid on the earlier of the first day of principal photography or the sale/transfer/assignment of the script.

28. Can I submit a mix of French and English-language projects in my portfolio?

Yes, applications under the Prequalified Stream may contain a mix of French and English-language projects.

3 Questions Regarding the Selective Streams (General Stream, Indigenous Stream & Stream for Black People and People of Colour)

29. Why is the General Stream being phased out?

A thorough analysis of the previous iteration of the program, grounded in data, benchmarking, and industry feedback, identified a number of challenges as well as opportunities for improvement. The review highlighted areas where the program could better support the progression of projects toward production and better align timelines with the pace of industry cycles.

High application volumes and a project-by-project structure contributed to more limited predictability for producers and made it harder to sustain momentum, while feedback from applicants underscored the importance of enabling companies to develop multiple projects concurrently.

To address these challenges and seize the opportunities identified, the program is transitioning toward an automatic portfolio-based approach. By enabling a greater number of companies with demonstrated recent activity to access portfolio-based development funding, the program aims to maximize the impact of its investments. The objective is to support a higher volume of projects advancing to production while fostering a more stable, resilient, and sustainable ecosystem of production companies.

30. Are there any changes to the eligibility criteria for the Selective streams this year?

Yes. The eligibility criteria of the **General Stream** have been revised to focus on the **track record of the individual lead producer in the past 6 years**. The list of qualifying festivals has also been modified to match the list of designated festivals for the Prequalified stream.

The **eligibility criteria for the BPOC and Indigenous streams have remained mostly unchanged** except for the list of Qualifying Festivals that has been refined.

See the [Development guidelines](#) for the full list of eligibility requirements applicable to these streams.

31. If I was unsuccessful in my Development application, may I re-apply with the same project?

A project that has been unsuccessful **twice** in the Development Program is not eligible to be re-submitted.

It is highly recommended that a project that has been unsuccessful once have substantial updates to the creative material before being re-submitted.

32. What should be included in the Pitch Document?

The Pitch Document is a maximum 10-page document (including visuals) that varies for each project. It should include (but is not limited to) the following:

- Logline – max. 100 words. Describe your film in one sentence.
- Synopsis – max. 500 words. Provide a brief plot synopsis of your film's storyline.
- Creative Vision – max. 500 words. Describe the intent and artistic approach to the project, which may include thoughts on themes and characters, origin of story, visual and aural style, tone, genre and mood. We welcome insight into your process and your connection to the material. If you have visual materials that illustrate your creative vision, we encourage you to include them in this section.

- Development Plan – max. 750 words. Articulate the creative intentions and goals for developing the script (including areas of focus, rewrite notes etc). Describe any other creative or packaging goals that you have for the project. If this is a subsequent application, please explain the evolution of the project since the last application.
- Producer Summary - max 500 words. Describe the status of the project, initiatives undertaken to advance it, and ongoing creative and strategic perspectives to move it into production. This is also an opportunity to highlight how this project will benefit from development funding. Describe:
 - *Who are the audiences for your film?*
 - *What are the comparable titles for your film?*
 - *What will you do to connect with your audiences?*
- Track Record. This should include key creative team information, such as previous work (max 300 words each) for the applicant: producer(s), screenwriter(s), director(s) (if attached). It is also helpful to highlight any mentors, and key cast or crew attached to the project submitted, if applicable.

33. What is a Community Engagement Plan and what should be in it?

A Community Engagement Plan is required for all projects. It is an opportunity for filmmakers to talk about their working process and demonstrate meaningful engagement with all areas of impact of their project.

Telefilm wants to see that the team has considered the potential impact of their production and that they have a plan to work in ways that are collaborative and respectful of impacted communities. The plan is where applicants highlight their approach and may also be an opportunity to discuss the identity and lived experiences of the key creative team where it is relevant to the project. It also helps to address questions that advisory committee members may have about the team's approach to the content and its potential impacts.

Good intentions don't always mean there is no impact. To be intentionally aware of the impact is to minimize harm, challenge stereotypes and uplift underrepresented groups. Teams are expected to be responsible for the impact of their work and to consider:

- how the film is made and the process behind it;
- how the film impacts and is received by those with relevant lived experience; and
- how the film impacts society and societal views broadly.

The process for accurate cultural depictions and authentic storytelling may include collaboration with those with the relevant lived experience at all stages of the project while recognizing that no one can speak on behalf of an entire culture or underrepresented group. True engagement is more than a checkbox or tokenizing a single person or experience and requires thoughtful collaboration. To minimize barriers that show up in representation and collaboration, it's important to also know and consider historical injustice and current social barriers that underrepresented groups experience. For more information on Authentic Storytelling, please visit Telefilm's [webpage](#).

Appropriate engagement will depend on the content of the film, the knowledge of the team, and the territories and communities being represented on-screen, as well as territories where the film is shooting. All phases of a project present an opportunity for engagement. Applicants may outline plans including, but not limited to:

- ✓ Research practices;
- ✓ How sensitive content is treated in the script and how it will be handled while filming;
- ✓ Engaging appropriate and specialized expertise, including (but not limited to): hiring advisors, on-set counsellors, local crew and crew-hiring organizations, cultural knowledge keepers, etc.;
- ✓ Engaging appropriately with local communities, organizations, and/or businesses;
- ✓ Involving community members in their creative team and entering into written agreements when appropriate; and
- ✓ Compensating all roles, including trainees, appropriately.

The details of the plan will depend entirely on the specific needs of the project, the communities involved, and what the filmmakers deem is appropriate for their project.

Filmmaking teams are encouraged to consult resources like [On-Screen protocols & Pathways: A Media Production Guide](#) for guidance on working with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities as well as [Being Seen: Directives for Creating Authentic and Inclusive Content](#).

For projects submitted to the Indigenous Stream and/or having Indigenous content, applicants are encouraged to add information about the Indigenous identities of the team as described further below.

For further information, applicants may contact their Feature Film Executive, the Lead, Inclusion Initiatives or the Inclusion Initiatives Advisor.

34. How does the evaluation differ between the General Stream and the BPOC and Indigenous streams?

The General Stream is being phased out, with the objective of moving to a wholly automatic selection process by 2027-2028 to allow for slate development and greater company sustainability. As a move in that direction for this year of transition, the General Stream will place primary emphasis on evaluating the track record of key creative team, with less emphasis on the creative materials.

For the BPOC and Indigenous streams, the evaluation criteria remain mostly the same, with the greatest weight being on the creative material, followed by track record—which now carries more weight than before—and then Cultural Impact.

For more details on the evaluation process, please refer to the stream-specific [evaluation grids](#).

35. Who evaluates the applications in the Selective Streams?

Advisory committees will evaluate the projects based on the above evaluation criteria and make a recommendation to Telefilm.

Internal advisory committee representatives are members of the Project Financing and Business Affairs teams at Telefilm including National and Regional Feature Film Executives, Content Analysts and Investment Analysts located in Telefilm's offices across the country.

Where advisory committees include external members, such members will be film industry experts with the necessary expertise and experience to be able to assess the strength and quality of the applications according to the evaluation criteria.

In all cases, the advisory committees for the Stream for Black People and People of Colour and the Indigenous Stream will include members who belong to each of these groups and will reflect regional diversity and gender parity.

There may be different advisory committees based on language and region.

4 Questions Regarding the Indigenous Stream

36. I am an Indigenous filmmaker and want to apply for funding for my project. Is there someone I can reach out to with my questions?

Telefilm has a [webpage](#) dedicated to Indigenous initiatives which includes information about Telefilm's commitment to supporting Indigenous filmmakers, as well as the Indigenous funding available, the application and decision-making processes, and links to helpful guides and tools.

The Feature Film Executive, Indigenous Content and Development is your liaison with Telefilm and is available to discuss your application strategy and other issues.

Note: The application materials must be submitted exclusively in one language, either in English or French.

37. What does Telefilm consider in its review of “creative, financial and distribution control” of projects submitted to the Indigenous Stream of the program?

In its review, Telefilm will consider elements such as the decision-making authority and creative control as documented in coproduction agreements, budget remuneration, revenue sharing, performance ratio sharing, chain of title, etc. Telefilm recognizes that every project is different, and control may manifest in different ways depending on the Indigenous team members' expertise and roles. The intent is to support companies that are controlled by Indigenous people who are meaningfully involved in all relevant decision-making related to the creative, financial and distribution elements of the project.

38. How will Indigenous projects be evaluated?

Indigenous projects will be assessed by an advisory committee comprised of internal and external Indigenous industry experts who will make recommendations to Telefilm. In its assessment, the advisory committee will take into account Telefilm's objective to foster a diversity of voices, ensuring Telefilm funds a balanced portfolio of productions reflecting a variety of genres, budget and company sizes, regions across the country, and different viewpoints as well as a balance of Indigenous nations and Indigenous languages.

All projects will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria set out in Telefilm's [Development Program's guidelines](#). The objectives of narrative sovereignty outlined in the On-Screen Pathways and Protocols: A Media Production Guide will also be a factor in the consideration of all Indigenous projects and content, including projects submitted to the General Stream.

39. How is Telefilm assessing Indigenous identity?

All members of the key creative team of each project submitted under the Program will be asked to complete a self-identification questionnaire at application submission.

Indigenous creatives should know and be able to articulate their relation and connection to their Indigenous identity. The applicant may want to include a short introduction of the key creative personnel and their identities in the Community Engagement Plan. We do not expect private information about the key creative team members to be provided that might cause them harm. Furthermore, all personal information must be provided only with prior consent of the individuals concerned.

Telefilm reserves the right to request additional information.

If you have questions, please contact the Feature Film Executive, Indigenous Content and Development.