

CANADA FEATURE FILM FUND (CFFF)

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

GUIDELINES

APPLICABLE AS OF JULY 7, 2025

Ce document est également disponible
en français

Table of Contents

Program Summary	3
Guiding Principles	3
1. PRESENTATION OF THE STREAMS	4
2. APPLICANTS ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	4
2.1. Criteria Applicable to All Streams	4
2.2. Criteria Applicable to the Prequalified Stream	4
2.3. Criteria Applicable to the Indigenous Stream	5
2.4. Criteria Applicable to the Stream for Black People and People of Colour	5
3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA APPLICABLE TO PROJECTS SUBMITTED FOR FUNDING	5
4. DECISION-MAKING PROCESS	7
4.1. Prequalified Stream	7
4.2. Selective Streams	8
4.3. Evaluation Criteria	9
5. TERMS OF FUNDING	9
5.1. Telefilm's Financial Participation	9
5.2. Maximum Funding Amount and Number of Projects per Application	10
5.3. Eligible Costs	10
5.4. Delivery	11
5.5. Previously Funded Projects	11
6. APPLICATION PROCESS	11
6.1. Maximum Number of Applications and Choice of a Stream	11
6.2. Application Submission and Required Documents	11
7. GENERAL INFORMATION	12
APPENDIX - SPRINGBOARD INITIATIVE	13

Program Summary

The Development Program (the “**Program**”) aims to support the development of eligible Canadian feature films and is intended for Canadian production companies involved in the production of feature films in Canada.

These guidelines provide direction regarding the Program’s objectives, its eligibility and evaluation criteria, and its terms of funding.

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles of the Program are to invest in:

- the development of feature films that will speak to Canadian and international audiences, and that will bring both cultural impact and audience engagement. Telefilm seeks to fund films that will proceed to production and build and contribute to Canada’s cultural legacy.
- teams with a strong sensibility and perspective who will bring original voices and approaches and will advance cinematic expression.
- emerging and established teams and to support them in advancing their artistic career through ambitious and impactful films.
- greater equity and representation in storytelling, that reflects gender parity and representation from various communities including Indigenous, Black People and People of Colour as well as members of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and People with Disabilities from all regions of the country.
- Indigenous content that is produced by creators who are Indigenous and/or have engaged in meaningful research, collaboration, and cooperation with Indigenous communities impacted by their projects. Telefilm encourages all applicants to respect the guiding principles and best practices set out in the [On-Screen Protocols & Pathways Media Production Guide](#).
- creative teams who are from underrepresented communities and/or who have engaged in meaningful research, collaboration, and cooperation with communities impacted by their projects.
- creative teams from Official Language Minority Communities and those situated outside the main production centers of Toronto and Montreal.
- content creation that helps advance sustainable production practices and that encourages environmental responsibility.
- companies with a strong performance by providing them with the predictability and flexibility necessary to develop successful Canadian audiovisual projects.

The Program allocates resources on a **linguistic basis** which maintains approximately **one-third of funding** for **French-language** projects.

1. PRESENTATION OF THE STREAMS

Funding under this Program may be automatic or selective, depending on the stream:

- **Automatic Funding – Prequalified Stream: Automatic** development funding for 125 eligible Canadian companies with a total performance ratio ranking among the highest ones, subject to regional and linguistic distribution. **All eligible applicants will be notified of their eligibility status and the amount of funding** to which they are eligible ahead of the opening of the Program.
- **Selective Funding: Selective** funding for eligible Canadian companies. Projects are evaluated by advisory committees based on the evaluation criteria indicated below and ranked using an evaluation grid. There are three selective streams: the General Stream, the Indigenous Stream, and the Stream for Black People and People of Colour.

As of Summer of 2024, Telefilm launched a **pilot initiative** by which projects that were unsuccessful under the Production Program but that were ranked highly may be invited to apply for development funding under this Program to strengthen their project. All the details relating to this new initiative are available in the Appendix.

2. APPLICANTS ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

2.1. Criteria Applicable to All Streams

All applicants must:

- a) be Canadian-controlled corporations, in accordance with sections 26 to 28 of the [Investment Canada Act](#);
- b) have their head office and carry out their activities in Canada; **and**
- c) operate as audiovisual companies.

2.2. Criteria Applicable to the Prequalified Stream

In addition to meeting the general eligibility criteria, applicants must have a total performance ratio ranking among the highest ones, subject to regional and linguistic splits. The performance ratio of an Applicant is determined by the sum of the weighted performance ratio of all Canadian projects:

- a) produced by the Applicant;
- b) supported by Telefilm in production; **and**
- c) released theatrically **between January 1, 2019, and December 31, 2024**, as evidenced by the Movie Theatre Association of Canada (MTAC).

Projects that meet the first two criteria but that were **only released on digital platforms due to the COVID-19 pandemic** will also be taken into consideration in the performance ratio calculations if:

- ✓ they were released digitally **between March 1, 2020, and December 31, 2021**, by a **third-party distributor** or by a **Telefilm-approved distributor**;
- ✓ they **received funding** under Telefilm's **National Marketing Program**; **and**
- ✓ the **digital release was authorized by Telefilm** due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

➤ Filmography

The Applicant is responsible for ensuring that its filmography in Dialogue is accurate at all times. For more information on the performance ratio calculation and access to the Prequalified Stream, please refer to the Performance Ratio Calculation and Access to the Prequalified Stream Summary available on the Program's [webpage](#).

➤ **Share in the Performance Ratio**

All applicants must have at least 20% share in the performance ratio of the previous works considered for their eligibility, as established at time of contract if the work was funded by Telefilm in production. If not, Telefilm will consider copyright share.

➤ **Credits**

The individual lead producer of the Applicant company must have received one of the following production credits in the previous works considered in the determination of the Applicant's eligibility:

- ✓ Producer;
- ✓ Executive producer;
- ✓ Coproducer.

➤ **Two Releases**

Telefilm will rely only on the first release date of a work to determine if it was released between the dates indicated above. For example, if a work was both released theatrically and at a festival, it is the date of the first of these occurrences that counts. The two periods cannot be combined to exceed six years.

2.3. Criteria Applicable to the Indigenous Stream

All applicants must be production companies that are **majority-owned and controlled by Indigenous persons**.

2.4. Criteria Applicable to the Stream for Black People and People of Colour

All applicants must be production companies that are **majority-owned and controlled by Black persons and/or people of colour**.

3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA APPLICABLE TO PROJECTS SUBMITTED FOR FUNDING

All projects must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- a. **Language:** All projects must be written in **English, French** or in an **Indigenous language** and intended to be produced and completed in these languages.

Note: Projects intended to be produced and completed in a language other than English, French or an Indigenous language for artistic imperatives are also eligible.

In all cases, **all documentation must be submitted** to Telefilm **exclusively in one official language**, either English or French.

- b. **Screenwriter:** All projects must be solely written by Canadian citizens within the definition of the Citizenship Act, or permanent residents, within the definition of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.
- c. **Format:** All projects must be intended to be feature-length (75 minutes or more) fictional or documentary films.
- d. **Canadian Content:** All projects must be intended to be Canadian, i.e., either:
- certified by CAVCO as a "Canadian film or video production" with a minimum of **8 out of 10 points** or the prorated equivalent (i.e., a minimum of 80% of available CAVCO points¹); **or**

¹ Note that a documentary project that has less than 6 points in total can still be eligible provided that all filled positions are occupied by Canadians.

- recognized as an **Audiovisual Treaty Coproduction** by the Minister of Canadian Heritage.
- e. **Telefilm's Programs:** All projects must be intended to be theatrically released and eligible for production funding under the [Production Program](#), the [Theatrical Documentary Program](#) or the [Talent to Watch Program](#).
 - f. **Ethics and Programming Standards:** The projects must not contain any element that is an offence under the [Criminal Code](#), is libellous or is in any other way unlawful. The applicant must also use its best efforts to comply and align with the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) Code of Ethics and with all other programming standards endorsed by the CAB or the CRTC when applicable and as deemed appropriate in the context of the production of the project.
 - g. **Outstanding Deliverables:** Any outstanding deliverables relating to a previous development phase must be submitted and approved by Telefilm prior to submitting that project for a subsequent phase.
 - h. **Financial and Creative Control:** All projects must be under the **financial and creative control** of the Applicant, which must hold all the **exclusive rights and options**, for at least **24 months**, necessary for the adaptation of the original work or concept (if applicable) and for the full and complete worldwide exploitation of the script and production.
 - ✓ **Indigenous Stream:** All projects submitted to the Indigenous Stream must also be under the **financial and creative control** of **Indigenous Persons**.
 - ✓ **Stream for Black People and People of Colour:** All projects submitted to the Stream for Black and People of Colour must also be under the **financial and creative control** of **Black persons and/or people of colour**.
 - i. **Key Creative Personnel – Indigenous Stream:** All the key creative personnel members (i.e., producer(s), screenwriter(s), and, at the packaging phase, director(s)) must be **Indigenous**.
 - j. **Key Creative Personnel – Stream for Black People and People of Colour:** All the key creative personnel members (i.e., producer(s), screenwriter(s), and, at the packaging phase, director(s)) must be **Black persons and/or people of colour**.
 - k. **Previous Producer Experience:**
 - **Prequalified Stream**

Access to the Prequalified Stream is based on the filmography of the Applicant. Therefore, there are no additional requirements in terms of previous producer experience.
 - **General Stream**

For a project to be eligible to the General Stream, **the producer must have produced at least one Canadian fictional or documentary feature film** (i.e., that was certified by CAVCO with **a minimum of 8 out of 10 points**² or recognized as an audiovisual coproduction by the Minister of Canadian Heritage) that was **either**:

 - ✓ released theatrically; **or**
 - ✓ presented at a Qualifying Festival (see list on Telefilm's [website](#) in the Application Documents section); **or**
 - ✓ funded through the Talent to Watch Program and released digitally; **or**

² Or prorated equivalent (i.e., 80% of the available CAVCO points)

- ✓ released digitally due to the COVID-19 pandemic between March 1, 2020, and June 30, 2022, by a third-party distributor or a Telefilm-approved distributor, or funded through Telefilm's National Marketing Program for the digital release;

and received either a Producer or Co-Producer credit.

Note: If your company is majority-owned and controlled by either (i) Indigenous persons, (ii) members of an official language minority community or (iii) Black persons and/or people of colour, please refer to the requirements of the Indigenous Stream/Stream for Black People and People of Colour.

➤ **Indigenous Stream & Stream for Black People and People of Colour**

The producer must **have significant audiovisual industry experience, i.e., they must have previously produced at least either:**

- ✓ a Canadian feature film (i.e., that was certified by CAVCO with a **minimum of 6 out of 10 points**³ or recognized as an audiovisual coproduction by the Minister of Canadian Heritage) that was released theatrically or digitally or screened at a Qualifying Festival; **or**
- ✓ a Canadian short film that was screened at a Qualifying Festival; **or**
- ✓ one hour of Canadian television (i.e., that was certified by CAVCO with a **minimum of 6 out of 10 points**⁴ or recognized as an audiovisual coproduction by the Minister of Canadian Heritage);

and received either a Producer or Co-Producer credit.

4. DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

4.1. Prequalified Stream

Funding under the Prequalified Stream is automatic as long as the eligibility criteria are met.

There are **three levels** of funding, the access to which is determined by the ranking of production companies which is based on their performance ratio.

In total, **125 companies** will have access to the Prequalified Stream. Depending on their ranking, companies may be in tier **A, B or C**.

Tier **A** includes **25 companies**:

- ✓ **8 French-language companies** with the highest performance ratio; and
- ✓ **17 English-language companies** with the highest performance ratio.

Tiers **B** and **C** include a **further 100 companies cumulatively**:

- ✓ **One third of these (34)** are French-language companies; and
- ✓ **Two thirds (66)** are English-language companies that are selected based on their performance ratio, but also in a manner that ensures regional representation across the country.

Of these 100 companies, the top 50 make up tier B, and the next 50 make up tier C.

³ Or prorated equivalent (i.e., 60% of the available CAVCO points)

⁴ Or prorated equivalent (i.e., 60% of the available CAVCO points)

To determine a company's language, Telefilm uses the weighted sum of the Canadian shares of eligible films' production budgets. A company whose majority of production expenses were incurred on French-language projects will be considered a French-language company, and vice versa if the majority of expenses were incurred on English-language projects.

4.2. Selective Streams

Funding under the selective streams (the General Stream, the Indigenous Stream and the Stream for Black People and People of Colour) is selective.

Advisory committees will evaluate projects submitted under these streams based on the evaluation criteria described below. Advisory committees may be composed of internal members, external members, or a mix of internal and external members.

➤ Diversity of Voices

The decision-making process takes into consideration Telefilm's goal of fostering a diversity of voices in the industry, ensuring that Telefilm funds a balanced portfolio of productions reflecting a variety of genres, budgets and company sizes, regions of the country and different viewpoints.

As part of fostering a diversity of voices, Telefilm may prioritize projects whose key creatives (i.e., producer(s), screenwriter(s) and, at the packaging phase, director(s)) are members of communities supported through Telefilm's inclusion initiatives:

- Indigenous people;
- Black people;
- People of colour;
- 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals;
- People with gender-diverse identities and expressions;
- People with disabilities; and
- Members of official language minority communities.

Gender parity will continue to be a priority across all programs. Prioritization also considers the intersectionality of identities as a way to better reflect a large spectrum of lived experiences.

➤ Canadian Point of View

Telefilm aims to support the production of feature films that contain significant Canadian creative elements. While Telefilm does not intend to restrict filmmakers in their choice of stories or natural settings, it will, wherever possible, give priority to projects that offer a distinctly Canadian point of view.

➤ Indigenous Stream

In keeping with its commitment to ensuring the inclusion of Indigenous creators, Telefilm sets aside funds for projects by Canadian filmmakers who are from Indigenous communities. The spirit and intent of the Indigenous Stream is to support Indigenous filmmakers with a view to remedying the historical and contemporary inequities experienced by these peoples. Advisory committees composed of external and internal Indigenous industry professionals evaluate the projects submitted to the Indigenous Stream based on the evaluation criteria described below and make recommendations to Telefilm. Telefilm encourages applicants to respect the guiding principles and best practices set out in the [On-Screen Protocols & Pathways Media Production Guide](#).

➤ Stream for Black People and People of Colour

As part of its larger goal of achieving a funding portfolio that better represents Canada, Telefilm sets aside funds for projects by Canadian filmmakers who are Black and/or people of colour.

These projects are evaluated by advisory committees composed of external and internal members who are Black industry professionals or people of color. The advisory committees evaluate the projects based on the evaluation criteria described below and make recommendations to Telefilm.

4.3. Evaluation Criteria

Advisory committees will evaluate projects submitted to the General Stream, the Indigenous Stream and the Stream for Black People and People of Colour based on the evaluation criteria described below. Each advisory committee will use an evaluation grid to score and rank eligible projects. The grid is available on the Program's [webpage](#).

4.3.1. Creative Elements

Telefilm evaluates the creative elements of the project, including:

- ✓ The originality and quality of the creative materials (including the synopsis, the pitch document, and the treatment or script);
- ✓ The cinematic potential of the film;
- ✓ The elements that speak to Canadian experiences and audiences; and
- ✓ The level, nature, and quality of the engagement described in the Community Engagement Plan.

4.3.2. Track Record of the Key Creative Personnel

Telefilm evaluates the screen-based industry experience of the creative team, primarily of the **producer** and **screenwriter** (and the **director for the packaging phase**), including their critical acclaim and audience success.

Telefilm also considers the track record based on past and current performance including the creative team's full range of industry experience and level of expertise as it relates to the nature and scope of the project.

Lastly, Telefilm takes into account any relevant complementary expertise of the creative team.

4.3.3. Cultural Impact and Audience Reach Potential

Telefilm assesses the potential cultural and public impact of the project by considering:

- ✓ Its cultural and/or commercial potential;
- ✓ Its potential to find and reach its target audience;
- ✓ Whether it speaks to a Canadian and international audience and/or whether it targets an underrepresented audience; and
- ✓ Whether it has the capacity to stand out in the current cinematic landscape.

Furthermore, Telefilm also considers the project's potential for cultural resonance (e.g., critical reviews, film festival acclaim, adding to representation in content, generating new perspectives and cultural conversations, etc.).

5. TERMS OF FUNDING

5.1. Telefilm's Financial Participation

Telefilm's financial participation will take the form of an **advance repayable** in accordance with the terms of the contract between Telefilm and the Applicant, usually on the earliest of the following dates:

- ✓ The first day of filming (or of any other use of the script); **or**
- ✓ The date of the sale, assignment, or other disposition of the rights to a project.

Telefilm's **minimum financial participation** per project will be **\$15,000** and may go up to 100% of the budget for the selected development stage, subject to the caps below.

5.2. Maximum Funding Amount and Number of Projects per Application

The maximum funding amount and number of projects per application depend on the stream:

5.2.1. Prequalified Stream

- **Tier A:** \$100,000 – Max. 5 projects per application
- **Tier B:** \$60,000 – Max. 3 projects per application
- **Tier C:** \$35,000 – Max. 1 project per application

5.2.2. Selective Streams

Maximum of \$35,000 – Max. 1 project per application

5.3. Eligible Costs

Telefilm's financial participation must be used to cover eligible costs directly associated with the development stage of the project for which funding is requested. **Eligible costs include but are not limited to:**

- ✓ Budget breakdown;
- ✓ Corporate overhead (max 20% of direct costs);
- ✓ Demo;
- ✓ Design;
- ✓ Director fees (if the Director and the Screenwriter are not the same person or if it's at packaging phase);
- ✓ Fringe benefits;
- ✓ Graphic bible;
- ✓ Legal fees;
- ✓ Option fees including on a literary work (unless paid to the producer);
- ✓ Preproduction casting;
- ✓ Preproduction scouting;
- ✓ Producer fees (max 20% of direct costs);
- ✓ Research;
- ✓ Screenwriter fees, in accordance with the agreement;
- ✓ Scriptwriting workshops;
- ✓ Storyboard;
- ✓ Story Consultant/Script Editor, e.g., sensitivity, EDI (independent from the producer);
- ✓ Travel and related costs to assist in the preproduction scouting, the financing, or the final packaging of the film.

Only Canadian costs are eligible, with the exception of the following costs which can be non-Canadian:

- ✓ Costs related to non-Canadian script editors and consultants whose services do not result in any copyright ownership in the project;
- ✓ Costs related to obtaining an option on literary work or on an original idea.

Note: Eligible development costs for all phases except packaging must include scriptwriting fees. For animation projects, scriptwriting fees are **not** mandatory expenses for the second and subsequent drafts.

Telefilm encourages all applicants to collaborate with a story consultant or a script editor who is independent of the producer.

5.4. Delivery

Applicants must complete the development phase for which they have applied within 24 months of signature of Telefilm's financing agreement or prior to submitting a new development application for the same project.

5.5. Previously Funded Projects

If a project has previously received Telefilm development financing through another producer, the Applicant must assume the outstanding repayment obligations before Telefilm can consider financing said project again.

Telefilm must approve the transfer of rights to the new producer who will be responsible for repaying the development advance before the first day of principal photography.

6. APPLICATION PROCESS

6.1. Maximum Number of Applications and Choice of a Stream

Applicants can only apply **once a year**, and to **only one stream** even if they are eligible to more than one. The choice of stream is **final** and cannot be modified after the application is submitted.

Only one application per Corporate Group may be submitted unless the applicants demonstrate to Telefilm's satisfaction that members of the Corporate Group act independently (eg. different decision makers, business plans, etc) For the purposes hereof, a Corporate Group is defined as the applicant and its Related Parties⁵.

Moreover, for applications submitted to Selective streams: an individual producer's previous experience may only be used to assess eligibility for one application.

As of 2024, a project that was unsuccessful **two times** to the Program may not be re-submitted.

Additionally, a project may only receive funding under this Program a **maximum of four times**. The cumulative amount of development funding received by a project must be repaid on the earlier of the first day of principal photography or the sale/transfer/assignment of the script.

6.2. Application Submission and Required Documents

Applicants must apply online using [Dialogue](#) and must submit all required documentation as listed on Telefilm's [website](#). Applicants will be advised if their application is incomplete and will be given five (5) business days to provide missing documentation, following which additional documentation may not be accepted.

All documentation must be submitted online through Dialogue. If you experience technical difficulties, please contact your regional coordinator. If necessary, please consult the [Service Charter](#) available on Telefilm's website.

For further information on the Program, please see the Essential Information Guide available on the Program's [webpage](#).

⁵ "**Related Parties**" are defined as parties that are related within the meaning of the CPA Canada Handbook, as that definition may be amended from time to time, and as that definition may be adapted by Telefilm to the context of the film and television industry. In accordance with Section 3840 of the CPA Canada Handbook, "Related parties exist when one party has the ability to exercise, directly or indirectly, control, joint control or significant influence over the other. Two or more parties are related when they are subject to common control, joint control or common significant influence. Related parties also include management and immediate family members."

7. GENERAL INFORMATION

While compliance with the guidelines is a prerequisite to eligibility for funding, compliance does not guarantee entitlement to Telefilm funds. Telefilm may make adjustments to its guidelines and application forms from time to time, as required. Telefilm has full discretion in the application of, or exception to, these guidelines to ensure that its funding is provided to those projects that meet its spirit and intent. In all matters of interpretation of either these guidelines, or the spirit and intent of this Program, Telefilm's interpretation shall prevail.

Any information provided, obtained, created, or communicated in connection with the application or portfolio is subject to the [Access to Information Act](#) and the [Privacy Act](#).

All Telefilm programs are subject to the availability of funding.

APPENDIX

SPRINGBOARD INITIATIVE - PILOT

Initiative Summary

As of Summer 2024, Telefilm launched a new pilot initiative called the Springboard Initiative (the “Initiative”) by which applications that were unsuccessful in the Production program, but were ranked highly at evaluation, may be invited to apply for development funding to strengthen their project for a future Production application.

IMPORTANT: Funding under this Initiative **does not** guarantee funding under the Production program.

Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles of the Initiative are:

- To strengthen the continuum of support to projects;
- To accelerate support for development funding to improve the competitiveness of a re-application to the Production Program; and
- To support a pipeline of projects that better represents the diversity of Canada in terms of gender parity, representation from various communities including Indigenous, Black People and People of Colour, members of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, People with Disabilities, official language minority communities as well as regional balancing.

1. Presentation of the Initiative

Funding under this Initiative will be based on the evaluation of the project in the Production program and will be provided to applicants who meet the criteria set out below. Priority will be given to projects whose key creative personnel are from underrepresented groups and/or under-served regions.

Unless otherwise provided in this Appendix, all terms and conditions of the Development guidelines apply to the Initiative (with necessary adjustments as deemed applicable and/or appropriate by Telefilm).

2. Eligibility Criteria for Applicants

All applicants must meet the criteria set out in section 2.1 of the Development guidelines **and** must have **received an invitation to apply** to the Initiative from Telefilm.

3. Eligibility Criteria for Projects

The project and key creative personnel must meet the criteria set out in paragraphs (a) to (j) of section 3 of the Development guidelines **and** the key creative personnel must remain the same as those attached to the Production application.

4. Decision-Making Process

Funding under this Initiative is automatic, provided that the applicant received an invitation to apply from Telefilm and that the above eligibility criteria are met.

Telefilm's decision to invite an applicant to apply to this Initiative is based on the evaluation of the project by the advisory committee in the Production program, as well as Telefilm's assessment of the potential of the project and its ability to help Telefilm reach its objective of fostering a diversity of voices in the industry.

5. Terms of Funding

Funding will take the form of a **repayable advance of a maximum amount of \$35,000** for one project, subject to the terms and conditions set out in subsections 5.1, 5.3. and 5.5. of the Development guidelines.

The development phase for which funding is provided must be intended to be completed within 6 months of the signature of Telefilm's financing agreement.

6. Application Process

Applicants who have been invited to this Initiative will be able to apply via Dialogue outside of the regular intake period for the Development program.

Applicants can only benefit from this Initiative **once** for the same project.

Note that applicants may reapply to the Development program in the same year if their eligibility status to the program allows, but it cannot be for the same project as the one supported through this Initiative.

Please refer to the List of Required Documents on the Development [webpage](#) for the list of documents to submit at time of application.