

Guidelines

General Admission Festivals Program

Applicable to festivals
taking place starting on
or after October 1, 2026

APPLICABLE AS OF MARCH 27, 2026
Ce document est également disponible en
français

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Presentation of the Program

The General Admission Festivals Program (the “Program”) provides financial support to emerging and small-scale Canadian film festivals that help promote Canadian films and talent and stimulate demand for our multiscreen content.

As a partner of choice, Telefilm Canada (“Telefilm”) is committed to advancing the development of the industry and reaching audiences where they are. Through this Program, Telefilm supports film festivals across the country and remains committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion and environmental sustainability to foster and support an industry that is representative and accountable to all communities in Canada.

These guidelines provide direction on the eligibility criteria and funding conditions under this Program.

Objectives

The objectives of this Program are to:

- Provide streamlined funding for small and emerging film festivals across the country that stimulate audience demand for Canadian content.
- Support an equitable¹ and balanced portfolio of festivals in terms of regional representation and diversity of supported festivals’ mandates² (e.g., festivals whose mandate is to only showcase and promote the work of creators who belong to the following groups: Indigenous, Black, People of Colour, 2SLGBTQIA+, Persons with Disabilities, Women, Gender-Diverse identities and expressions, and/or Members of Official Language Minority Communities).
- Support festivals that advance sustainable practices and environmental responsibility.

Please note that applicants may only receive funding for the same festival under one program, either under the [Medium to Large-Scale Festivals Program](#) or under this Program.

¹ Telefilm seeks to achieve resource equity (the distribution of resources across the portfolio in order to close equity gaps) and representation equity (the proportional participation within the portfolio) in its funding decisions.

² The mandate should be part of the applicant’s overall mandate, charitable mission, and/or vision. This should be applicable regardless of the edition or year of the festival and should apply to all programming and events associated with the festival, not only to specific strands or sections.

1 Eligibility Criteria for Applicants

To be eligible, the applicant must meet all the following criteria:

- 1) Have a head office in Canada and operate in Canada; and
- 2) Be a Canadian-controlled organization, as determined under sections 26 to 28 of the *Investment Canada Act*, working in the film, television, or digital media sectors³.

2 Eligibility Criteria for Festivals

2.1 Basic Eligibility Criteria

This Program aims to support film festivals in Canada:

- 1) That are aimed at the **general public**. Student or amateur film festivals, screening series as well as festivals whose mandate is to screen and promote television, XR, podcasts and web-based content are not eligible;
- 2) That will be taking place over **three consecutive days** or longer in the **same city or regional municipality**;
- 3) That **have had at least 2 editions** before the one for which funding is requested;
- 4) That either have been **held at least once in their current format** in the last three years **or can demonstrate ability** to deliver current format;
- 5) Who exhibited a **minimum of five feature films** (or equivalent) and **15% of Canadian works** in the programming of their **previous edition**; and
- 6) Who undertake to exhibit a **minimum of five feature films** (or equivalent) and **15% of Canadian works** in the programming of the **edition for which they seek funding**.

Note: When the festival's programming consists of a combination of feature films (75 minutes and more), medium-length films (30 to 74 minutes) and short films (less than 30 minutes), the ratio will be 2:1⁴ for medium-length films and 4:1⁵ for short films⁶.

Telefilm may, at its discretion, provide flexibility on the minimum number of feature films (or equivalent) in the programming of the previous or current edition and accept festivals whose previous or current edition programming include a minimum of 10% of Canadian works. For more details, please see the Essential Information Guide available on the Program [webpage](#).

³ On a case-by-case basis, Telefilm may deem eligible community organizations who do not work in the film, television, or digital media sectors.

⁴ This means that two medium-length films are equivalent to one feature film.

⁵ This means that four short films are equivalent to one feature film.

⁶ For the purposes of these guidelines, music videos and television works are considered short films.

3 Evaluation Criteria

3.1 General Evaluation Criteria

In evaluating applications to the Program, Telefilm takes into consideration the following criteria:

- The festival's alignment with the intentions of the Program;
- The scope and format of the festival;
- The promotion of Canadian content and talent; and
- The Applicant's history of fulfilment of its contractual obligations towards Telefilm, including but not limited to the timely provision of reporting.

The history, composition and timing of all activities supported by the National Promotion funding programs as well as the breadth of applications and applicants/organizing teams will also be considered. Festivals that are held in a hybrid or in-person format may be considered preferentially for funding.

3.2 Diversity of Voices

The decision-making process takes into account Telefilm's objective to fund an equitable and balanced portfolio in terms of regional representation and diversity of voices.

As part of fostering a diversity of voices, Telefilm may prioritize festivals whose **mandate** is to **only** showcase and promote the work of creators who belong to communities supported through its Inclusion Initiatives:

- Indigenous;
- Black people;
- People of Colour;
- 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals;
- Women;
- Gender-diverse identities and expressions;
- Persons with disabilities;
- Members of Official Language Minority Communities.

4 Terms of Funding

4.1 Telefilm's Financial Participation

Telefilm's financial participation under this Program will be in the form of a non-recoupable contribution of **\$5,000**, which may be increased, in Telefilm's discretion, to up to **\$15,000**, dependent on the number of applications and availability of funds. For more details, please see the Essential Information Guide available on the Program's [webpage](#).

Applicants or organizing teams that operate multiple festivals during the year will be subject to a maximum annual funding of up to three festivals within this Program.

4.2 Access to Funding and Eligible Costs

Telefilm's funding must be used to cover direct expenses relating to the programming, promotion, delivery and administration of the festival. Furthermore, costs covered by Telefilm must not be borne by any other entity or program.

It is important to note that funds under this Program are limited and that not all applicants who meet the eligibility criteria are guaranteed to receive funding. Also note that applicants who have received Telefilm funding under the Promotion Program in past years are not guaranteed to receive funding via this Program or any other stream or program.

5 Application Process

Applications under this Program must be submitted during the appropriate application period indicated on the Program's [webpage](#), based on the dates during which the festival is held. Please consult the Program's [webpage](#) for the dates of the application periods.

All applications must be submitted online via [Dialogue](#) and include the documents included in the list of required documents available on the Program's [webpage](#). Please note that incomplete applications may be automatically rejected.

All first-time applicants are encouraged to contact the resource person for their region as listed on the Program's webpage before applying.

6 General Information

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

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

All Telefilm programs are subject to the availability of funding from government and other sources.