

Essential Information Guide

General Admission
Festivals Program

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

Essential Information Guide

1. Can I receive funding under the Medium to Large-Scale Festivals Program and this program for the same edition of a festival?

No. Applicants may only receive funding for the same festival under one program in any given year, either through the Medium to Large-Scale Festivals Program or this program.

2. Can I apply to this program if my film festival has never been held before?

No. To be eligible, festivals must have had at least two previous editions, i.e., the current edition seeking funding must be at least the third edition of the festival.

3. What is a “Film Festival”?

A film festival is a multi-day event (at least three consecutive days in the same city or regional municipality) during which a selection of films (at least five feature films or equivalent) is screened for the general public.

4. What is a “Canadian work”?

A Canadian work is an audiovisual work that has either been 1) certified by the Canadian Audio-visual Certification Office (CAVCO) as a “Canadian film or video production”, 2) recognized as an audiovisual treaty coproduction by the Minister of Heritage or 3) directed and produced by Canadians and its copyright is owned by Canadians. Canadian works can be feature films, medium-length films, short films, television programs and digital productions.

5. How does Telefilm determine if 15% of the works in a festival’s previous edition were Canadian?

To be eligible for this Program, 15% of all works presented during a festival’s previous edition must be Canadian. If the previous year’s edition was impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic, Telefilm will take into consideration the last two (2) editions.

To determine the percentage of Canadian works, Telefilm will add up the number of Canadian feature films (i.e., 75 minutes or more) and the equivalent number of medium-length (30 to 74 minutes) and short films (less than 30 minutes) using the following ratios:

- 2 medium-length films are equivalent to 1 feature film;
- 4 short films are equivalent to 1 feature film.

Example:

The programming of the last edition of a festival consisted of:

- 20 feature films of which 10 were Canadian;
- 30 medium-length films of which 20 were Canadian; and
- 58 short films of which 40 were Canadian.

The percentage of Canadian works would be calculated as follows:

Step 1: Convert the number of medium and short films into feature films using the ratios

- **Medium-length films:** the programming included 30 medium-length films of which 20 were Canadian. Using the 2:1 ratio, this means:
 - 30 medium-length films are equivalent to **15 feature films**;

- 20 Canadian medium-length films are equivalent to **10 Canadian feature films**.
- **Short Films:** the programming included 58 short films of which 40 were Canadian. Using the 4:1 ratio, this means:
 - 58 short films are equivalent to **15 feature films (rounded)**;
 - 40 Canadian short films are equivalent to **10 Canadian feature films**.

Step 2: Calculate the total of all works (feature films and feature film equivalents)

- Number of feature films: 20
- Number of feature film equivalents (medium-length films converted): 15
- Number of feature film equivalents (short films converted): 15

Total number of all works: 50

Step 3: Calculate the total of all Canadian works (feature films and feature film equivalents)

- Number of Canadian feature films: 10
- Number of Canadian feature film equivalents (medium-length films converted): 10
- Number of Canadian feature film equivalents (short films converted): 10

Total number of Canadian works: 30

Step 4: Calculate the percentage of Canadian works in the programming

The programming of the previous edition consisted of 50 works of which 30 were Canadian. Thus, the percentage of Canadian works in the previous edition's programming is calculated as follows:

$(\text{Number of Canadian works} / \text{total number of all works}) \times 100\% = 60\%$

Total percentage of Canadian works: 60%

6. Will Telefilm consider applications from festivals that presented a minimum of 10% of Canadian works in their previous edition?

Telefilm may, in its discretion, accept applications from festivals that presented a minimum of 10% of Canadian works in their previous edition. Festivals must be able to demonstrate an intent to reach 15% in the coming edition and provide an acceptable reason for not reaching the 15% requirement in the previous edition. Applicants in this case must reach out to the National Promotion Regional Lead responsible for their region to discuss prior to the submission of their application.

7. How does Telefilm establish whether a festival's previous edition screened at least five feature films or equivalent?

To be eligible for this Program, five feature films (or equivalent) must have been screened during the festival's previous edition. If the previous year's edition was impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic, Telefilm will take into consideration the last two (2) editions.

To determine the number of feature films screened in the previous edition, Telefilm will add up the number of feature films (i.e., 75 minutes or more) and the equivalent number of medium-length and short films using the same ratios than for the calculation of the percentage of Canadian works above, meaning:

- 2 medium-length films are equivalent to 1 feature film
- 4 short films are equivalent to 1 feature film

Example:

The programming of the last edition of a festival consisted of:

- 2 feature films;
- 2 medium-length films; and
- 7 short films.

The total number of feature films and equivalents would be calculated as follows:

Step 1: Convert the number of medium and short films into feature films using the ratios

- 2 medium-length films are equivalent to 1 feature film (2:1 ratio);
- 7 short films are equivalent to 2 feature films (4:1 ratio, rounded).

Total feature film equivalents: 3

Step 2: Calculate the total of feature films and feature film equivalents

The programming of the last edition of a festival consisted of 2 feature films and 3 feature film equivalents, which totals 5.

Total number of feature films and feature film equivalents: 5

8. Will Telefilm consider applications from festivals that did not screen a minimum of five feature films (or equivalent) in their previous edition?

Telefilm may, in its discretion, accept applications from festivals that did not screen a minimum of five feature films (or equivalent) in their previous edition. Festivals that screen only short films or have historically had difficulty accessing films dictated by their mandate may be considered. Applicants in this case must reach out to the National Promotion Regional Lead responsible for their region to discuss prior to the submission of their application.

9. How do I determine what is the start and end date of my festival?

The start date of the festival should be the first day **of a consecutive period where** the general public can access or attend festival screenings (or activities of a similar nature). Often, this is the date the festival will hold its “opening night” festivities.

The end date of the festival is therefore the last day **of a consecutive period where** the general public can access or attend festival screenings (or activities of a similar nature). Often, this is the date the festival will hold its “closing night” festivities.

10. Can I apply for funding even if I have not held my festival in the current format before?

Yes. However, you must demonstrate the ability to deliver the current format if the festival was held in a different format previously due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Applicants should include this detail in the application and are encouraged to reach out to the National Promotion Regional Lead responsible for their region to discuss prior to the submission of the application.

11. In which cases can Telefilm’s Contribution exceed \$5,000?

Depending on the number of applications and availability of funds, Telefilm may decide, in its discretion, to provide a non-recoupable contribution of up to \$15,000 to:

- Larger-scale festivals;
- Festivals reflecting a regional representation; and/or
- Festivals whose mandate is to showcase and promote works by creators who belong to communities supported through Telefilm’s Inclusion Initiatives.

12. Is there a maximum amount that my organization can receive under this program for multiple festivals that I operate?

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 the General Admission Festivals Program. Telefilm will determine whether this limit will be imposed based on the structure of the applicant, including but not limited to whether the festivals are organized by the same team, have the same ownership structure or have the same parent company.

Applicants/teams that operate more than three festivals seeking funding must reach out to the National Promotion Regional Lead responsible for their region to discuss prior to the submission of their application.

13. How does Telefilm define the mandate of a festival?

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.

For example, if the festival **only** showcases and promotes works by Indigenous creators, then the festival's mandate would be considered as focused on showcasing and promoting works of Indigenous creators.

To consult the definitions used by Telefilm, please visit Telefilm's [website](#).

14. If my festival is hybrid, how do I determine the percentage of each component (in person, online, broadcast) to provide in the application?

A festival should determine how many total screenings and activities are undertaken for the festival, which should be a total of the screenings and activities held in person, online and over broadcast. This should be based on access to different audiences, rather than per day or activity, given that an activity or day could contain multiple screenings and activities held in different forms. It should be noted that online events do not need to be multiplied by days, since the access to their audience is assumed to be uninterrupted.

Calculation of the percentage of each hybrid component

Example:

The programming of a five-day film festival consisted of:

- 5 feature films screenings each day over each of the 5 days
- Concurrently, the same 5 feature films were screened online during those same 5 days (viewable at any time during those 5 days)

The percentage of each hybrid component would be calculated as follows:

Step 1: Calculate the total number of screenings

- 5 feature film screenings x 5 days = **25 screenings;**
- 5 feature film screenings online = **5 screenings.**

Total number of screenings: 30

Step 2: Calculate the in-person percentage

The number of in-person screenings is 25. The percentage of the in-person component is calculated as follows:

(Number of in-person screenings) ÷ (Total number of screenings) = 83%

Total in-person percentage: 83%

Step 3: Calculate the online percentage

The number of in-person screenings is 5. The percentage of the online component is calculated as follows:

$(\text{Number of online screenings}) \div (\text{Total number of screenings}) = 17\%$

Total online percentage: 17%

15. What does Telefilm consider as a material change to an activity?

A material change is a change that could have, in Telefilm's opinion, an impact on the applicant's ability to conduct the festival as initially planned. Material changes could include, among other things:

- a. Changes in key personnel if the new key personnel have less or non-equivalent experience;
- b. Change in the date of a festival that is now set in a similar period as another similar sized festival or activity in the same region;
- c. Change in the format, focus, mandate or activities of the festival;
- d. Change in the target market;
- e. Loss of partnership, etc.

Applicants must immediately provide a written notice of such material changes to Telefilm and Telefilm will work with applicants on a case-by-case basis to review such situations, which may include the request for a revised proposal for the festival.

16. What percentage of administration costs can be included in a film festival's budget?

Administrative costs generally cannot exceed 25% of the festival's direct costs (direct costs are the total budget minus administrative costs).

17. Who do you consider as "key personnel" for a festival?

Key personnel would include the executive director and the programming/artistic director, or their equivalent.

18. When should applications be submitted?

The Program has two opening periods. Each opening period is of a short duration and targets film festivals taking place on specific dates.

Please check the Program [webpage](#) to verify the applicable period that matches the dates of your festival to ensure that the application is submitted for the correct period.

Applications under this Program must be submitted during the appropriate application period. No applications will be accepted outside the application period. Please note that incomplete applications may be automatically rejected.

It is also recommended to subscribe to Telefilm's [industry advisories](#) on the Telefilm webpage to stay informed on Telefilm announcements.

19. How should the in-person, virtual/online and broadcast attendance be calculated?

The attendance numbers should be based on confirmed attendance and not only on tickets sold. Each ticket purchased/claimed should account for one individual only if in-person and one household or individual only if virtual/online or broadcast, unless the number of people viewing per ticket was collected by the applicant and can be verified through an external report.

For example, if fifty (50) tickets were bought for a virtual screening and each ticket viewed the film, an attendance of fifty (50) would be recorded under the virtual attendance category. All in-person and virtual/online attendance must be verifiable through a scanning or ticketing report (or an equivalent document) provided by a third-party resource. The reported attendance numbers should only contain the screenings associated with the festival and exclude any year-round screenings that may be held during the dates of the festival but are not promoted or associated with the festival. Any year-round screenings outside of the festival dates must be excluded as well.

For hybrid festivals that include a broadcast element to their screenings, please ensure that the attendance is based on third party information and obtained directly from the broadcaster/partner hosting the broadcast screenings. If no third-party confirmation of the broadcast attendance can be obtained, an attendance of “0” should be reported. Any year-round screenings not associated with the festival or screened outside of the festival dates should be excluded from the broadcast attendance number.

Please note that Telefilm may, at its discretion, request additional information to support the attendance numbers reported by the applicant. The reported attendance numbers may also be audited by Telefilm should the festival be funded.

20. If my festival meets all the eligibility criteria and I apply on time during the applicable opening period, am I guaranteed to receive funding?

Funding is never guaranteed. Funds under this Program are limited and that not all applicants who meet the eligibility criteria are guaranteed to receive funding.

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 program.

Telefilm will review the applications received during each application period to ensure that its overall funding under this Program is balanced in terms of regional representation and diversity of supported festivals' mandates (for example, by supporting festivals whose mandate is to showcase works of creators who are part of one or more of 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).

The scope of the film festival as well as its promotion of Canadian content and talent will be considered. As well, 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 a factor alongside the applicant's history of fulfilment of its contractual obligations towards Telefilm.

Please note that Telefilm's funding is contingent on the applicant's continued compliance with the eligibility and evaluation criteria set out in the Program guidelines.