

# **TALENT TO WATCH PROGRAM**

FUNDING OF FIRST FEATURE FILMS FROM EMERGING FILMMAKERS

## GUIDELINES

APPLICABLE AS OF OCTOBER 7, 2021

Ce document est également disponible  
en français

**Table of Content**

Program Summary ..... 3

Program Intent and Objectives ..... 3

1. Program Overview ..... 4

2. Program Eligibility ..... 4

    2.1. Eligibility Criteria Applicable to the Key Members of the Creative Team:..... 4

        2.1.1. General Eligibility Criteria for all Streams..... 4

        2.1.2. Additional Eligibility Criteria for Key Members of the Creative Teams of Projects Submitted Under the Festival Selection Stream ..... 5

        2.1.3. Additional Eligibility Criteria for Key Members of the Creative Teams of Projects Submitted Under the Stream for Underrepresented Filmmakers .....5

    2.2. Eligibility Criteria Applicable to ApplicantCompanies .....5

        2.2.1. General Eligibility Criteria for Applicants .....5

    2.3. Eligibility Criteria Applicable to Projects ..... 5

        2.3.1. General Eligibility Criteria .....5

        2.3.2. Additional Eligibility Criteria for Projects Submitted Under the Industry Partner Stream .....6

3. Evaluation Process ..... 7

    3.1. Creative Elements ..... 7

    3.2. Track Record of the Key Creative Personnel (Producer(s), Director, and Screenwriter)..... 7

    3.3. Project Viability ..... 7

    3.4. Cultural Impact and Audience Reach Potential ..... 7

4. Terms of Funding ..... 8

5. Mentorship ..... 8

6. Availability of Completed Projects ..... 8

7. Application Process ..... 9

    7.1. Industry Partner Stream ..... 9

    7.2. Festival Selection Stream and Stream for Underrepresented Filmmakers..... 9

8. General Information ..... 9

## **PROGRAM SUMMARY**

The *Talent to Watch Program – Funding of First Feature Films from Emerging Filmmakers* (the “**Program**”) aims to support a diverse array of emerging filmmakers<sup>1</sup>. The intended outcome of this Program is to discover and develop the next generation of Canadian filmmakers, and to allow them to establish their voice and sensibility through a first feature.

These guidelines provide direction regarding the Program’s targeted objectives, eligibility and evaluation criteria, and the terms and conditions of funding by Telefilm.

## **PROGRAM INTENT AND OBJECTIVES**

The guiding principles of the Program are:

- To support the production 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 build and contribute to our Canadian cultural legacy.
- To support teams with a strong sensibility and perspective who will bring original voices and approaches and will advance cinematic expression.
- To support emerging teams in advancing their artistic career.
- To support greater equity and representation in storytelling, that reflects gender parity and representation from various communities including Indigenous, Black and People of Colour as well as members of LGBTQ2+ communities and People with Disabilities from all regions of the country.
- To support Indigenous content that is produced by filmmakers who are Indigenous and/or have engaged in meaningful research, collaboration, and cooperation with Indigenous communities impacted by their projects.
- To support creative teams who are from underrepresented communities and/or who have engaged in meaningful research, collaboration, and cooperation with underrepresented communities, where films are dealing with the experiences of those communities.
- To give voice to creative teams from Official Language Minority Communities and those situated outside the main production centers of Toronto and Montreal.
- To increase audience access to the works of new Canadian talent.
- To support content creation that helps advance sustainable production practices, and that encourages environmentally responsible community engagement plans.

Resources within the Canada Feature Film Fund are allocated on a linguistic basis which maintains approximately one-third of funding for French-language projects.

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<sup>1</sup> Emerging filmmakers are producers, directors and writers.

## 1. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Emerging filmmakers can access this Program via three streams:

- **Industry Partner Stream:** Under the Industry Partner Stream, eligible filmmakers apply to their Designated Partner who will then choose which projects will be recommended to Telefilm. Each Designated Partner may recommend a project under the following components: the **Main component**, the **Indigenous component** and the **Official Language Minority Community (OLMC) component**. The list of Designated Partners for each component is available on [the Program's webpage](#). These partners all have a strong connection to emerging talent and include recognized training institutions with a film training program, film cooperatives and film festivals with talent incubators.
- **Stream for Underrepresented Filmmakers:** Under this Stream, emerging filmmakers who self-identify as being from underrepresented groups will be able to submit an application directly to Telefilm.
- **Festival Selection Stream:** Under this Stream, emerging filmmakers whose short films have been selected at a festival listed in Appendix A will be able to submit an application directly to Telefilm.

## 2. PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

### 2.1. Eligibility Criteria Applicable to the Key Members of the Creative Team:

#### 2.1.1. General Eligibility Criteria for all Streams

The key members<sup>2</sup> of the creative teams of all eligible projects must:

- i. be Canadian citizens, within the definition of the *Citizenship Act*, or permanent residents within the definition of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*;
- ii. be emerging talent, i.e. they must have previously produced, directed and/or written at least a short film<sup>3</sup>, web productions, television, commercials, music videos, or equivalent experience in the screen-based industry. Furthermore, they cannot have previously held the same key position on a feature film<sup>4</sup>.

Note that producers who have previously produced **one** feature film that has received funding under this Program<sup>5</sup> are also considered as emerging talent. Additionally, Telefilm will show flexibility in the eligibility evaluation of key creatives who have previously produced, written or directed a feature film project of micro-budget scope<sup>6</sup> funded outside of this program and that had a limited release.

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<sup>2</sup> The key members of a project's creative team are the producer, writer and director of a project.

<sup>3</sup> A film of 30 minutes or less.

<sup>4</sup> For the purposes of this criterion, a feature film is 75 minutes or more. Telefilm may consider a project of a lesser duration as a feature film if it was considered as such by the industry.

<sup>5</sup> Please note that this Program was previously referred to as the "Micro-Budget Production Program".

<sup>6</sup> Examples of this type of projects: films which were self-financed or produced within a festival incubator or school program.

### **2.1.2. Additional Eligibility Criteria for Key Members of the Creative Teams of Projects Submitted under the Festival Selection Stream**

Directors of projects submitted to Telefilm must have directed a short film that was **selected** at one of the recognized film festivals listed in Appendix A in the two calendar years prior to the application to Telefilm.

### **2.1.3. Additional Eligibility Criteria for Key Members of the Creative Teams of Projects Submitted under the Stream for Underrepresented Filmmakers**

All Key Members of the Creative Team must be Indigenous, or self-identify as members of one or more of the following underrepresented groups:

- Black and People of Colour
- LGBTQ2+
- Women
- Persons with disabilities
- Official Language Minority Communities

## **2.2. Eligibility Criteria Applicable to Applicant Companies**

### **2.2.1. General Eligibility Criteria for Applicants:**

In order to submit an application under the Festival Selection Stream and the Stream for Underrepresented Filmmakers, an applicant company must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- i. operate as a film production company.
- ii. own 100% of the rights of the project.
- iii. be under Canadian control as determined under sections 26 to 28 of the *Investment Canada Act*.
- iv. be entirely owned and controlled by one or more members of key creative team of the project.

Under the Industry Partner Stream, projects are initially submitted by Designated Partners, not Applicants. Creative teams whose projects have been selected by Telefilm under the Industry Partner Stream will be required to incorporate a company which will then apply to Telefilm. Such incorporated company must meet the general eligibility criteria for Applicants indicated above.

For more information on the application process, please refer to section 7.

## **2.3. Eligibility Criteria Applicable to Projects:**

### **2.3.1. General Eligibility Criteria:**

To be eligible, a project must:

- i. be primarily produced in English, French or an Indigenous language<sup>7</sup>.
- ii. be intended to be fictional, or documentary audiovisual projects.
- iii. be a feature length film of 75 minutes or more.

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<sup>7</sup> Please note that this criterion is currently under revision and will be updated before the opening of the Program.

- iv. with respect to Canadian content certification, upon completion be either:
  - certified by the Canadian Audio-visual Certification Office (CAVCO) as a “Canadian film or video production” with a minimum of 8 out of 10 points under the provisions of the Income Tax Act (Canada); or
  - recognized as a treaty coproduction by the Minister of Canadian Heritage (refer to Telefilm’s guidelines on Audiovisual Coproductions).
- v. have a budget ranging between \$150,000 and \$500,000<sup>8</sup>;
- vi. conform to the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) Code of Ethics and to all other programming standards endorsed by the CAB or the CRTC, and not contain any element that is an offence under the *Criminal Code*, is libellous or in any other way unlawful.

**Note:** A project that has not been selected for funding under this Program in the past may be resubmitted once. Starting next year, in order for a project to be submitted more than once to Telefilm, such project must have been the subject of a recommendation to this effect by an advisory committee.

The following non-exhaustive list provides examples of the types of projects that are not eligible:

- projects done on contract for, or produced by, a government agency;
- projects produced primarily for industrial, corporate or institutional purposes;
- advertising;
- projects using film as a tool to record or document existing artworks such as a stage play;
- conventional forms of television entertainment, such as pilots, movies-of-the-week, and news reports;
- student films.

### 2.3.2. Additional Eligibility Criteria for Projects Submitted under the Industry Partner Stream:

Projects submitted under the Industry Partner Stream must be recommended to Telefilm by a Designated Partner.

- **Main component:** the partner must confirm that the director of the recommended project is a recent alumni<sup>9</sup> from one of the Designated Partner’s production programs, an active member<sup>10</sup> of the Designated Partner’s film cooperative or, in the case of a film festival partner, has participated in an incubator offered by that festival.
  - Note that partners can recommend producers and writers who are not recent alumni or active members of their institution, film cooperative or incubator initiative but, in all cases, producers and writers must be emerging talent as defined above.
- **Indigenous component:** the project’s Key Creatives must be Indigenous<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Telefilm may show flexibility for projects outside this budget range.

<sup>9</sup> Recent alumni of a Designated Partner’s production program are students who have graduated in the last five years calculated from the date of recommendation to Telefilm under this Program. Telefilm reserves the right to accept, under certain conditions, projects involving graduates who have graduated more than five years ago.

<sup>10</sup> Active members are people who have participated in workshops, programs and/or other training initiatives offered by the cooperative in the last three years calculated from the date of recommendation to Telefilm under this Program.

<sup>11</sup> “Indigenous peoples” is a collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants. “Indigenous” refers to

- **OLMC component:** in addition to the criteria applicable to the Main component, the Key Creatives must:
  - Self identify as Anglophones in Quebec, if the project is primarily produced in English, and is produced, written and directed in Quebec;
  - Self-identify as Francophones outside of Quebec, if the project is primarily produced in French, and is produced, written and directed outside of Quebec

**Note:** The partner must be able to demonstrate to Telefilm that it has the resources and the capacity to carry out the evaluation of the recommended project in the language in which they are submitted.

### **3. Evaluation Process**

Designated Partners and Applicant Companies must submit all documents included in the List of Required Documents on the [Program Webpage](#).

Advisory committees composed of external and internal experts will assess the projects based on the evaluation criteria described below and submit their recommendations to Telefilm. Each advisory committee will use an evaluation grid to score and rank eligible projects.

The decision making will also take into account Telefilm’s objective to foster a diversity of voices in the industry, ensuring Telefilm funds a balanced portfolio of productions reflecting a variety of genres, budget and company sizes, regions across the country, and different viewpoints. To that effect, Telefilm may notably prioritize projects whose key creative personnel (i.e. director and/or screenwriter and/or producer) self-identify as Indigenous, Black, People of Colour, LGBTQ2+, Persons with disabilities, women, and members of Official Language Minority Communities.

#### **Evaluation Criteria**

##### **3.1. Creative elements**

Telefilm will evaluate the creative elements of the projects including the originality, quality and production-readiness of the script, and the director’s vision for the film.

##### **3.2. Track record of the Key Creative Personnel (Producer(s), Director, and Screenwriter)**

Telefilm will evaluate the screen-based industry experience of the creative team, primarily the producer, director, and screenwriter, including critical acclaim. Telefilm will also consider the creative team’s full range of industry experience and level of expertise as it relates to the nature and scope of the project.

##### **3.3. Project Viability**

The financial feasibility and creative viability will be taken into account in the evaluation of the project.

##### **3.4. Cultural Impact and Audience Reach Potential**

Telefilm will consider the applicant’s promotional strategy to make the film available to its target audience, including through film festivals, theatrical release and digital platforms.

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First Nations, Inuit, or Metis.

#### 4. TERMS OF FUNDING

Telefilm's funding will be in the form of a non-repayable financial contribution<sup>12</sup> that may cover up to 100% of the project's financing. The maximum contribution amount is set at \$250,000 for fiction feature films and \$150,000 for theatrical documentaries.

Telefilm's financial contribution must be used to cover direct expenses relating to the production, and post-production of the project.

Please note that all projects supported through this Program must:

- Have a complete insurance package including an Errors & Omissions Insurance Policy satisfactory to Telefilm;
- Be made available in both official languages, through subtitling;
- Be closed-captioned; and
- Be available in described video, regardless of the distribution platform.

Sufficient funds must be reserved for these elements in the project's production budget.

#### 5. MENTORSHIP

In order to help the teams succeed in entering the Canadian film industry, Telefilm has mandated two of the Program's major partners, the Institut national de l'image et du son (INIS) and the National Screen Institute (NSI) to create a mentorship program tailored for teams whose projects are selected under this Program (the "**Mentorship Program**").

As a condition to funding, all teams receiving funding under this Program will be required to participate actively in the Mentorship Program for the entire project cycle, from preproduction to distribution. The Mentorship Program fees will be covered by Telefilm. More information on the Mentorship Program will be published on the Program's webpage.

#### 6. AVAILABILITY OF COMPLETED PROJECTS

Applicants who have received a financial contribution under this Program must start the principal photography of their project no later than **18 months** after:

- Telefilm's invitation to apply communicated to the Designated Partners, for projects submitted under the Industry Partner Stream;
- Telefilm's positive decision letter, for projects submitted under the Festival Selection Stream and the Stream for Underrepresented Filmmakers.

All projects funded by Telefilm must be made available on digital platforms no later than one year following their completion. No theatrical release is required under this Program.

Furthermore, all projects must be available in both official languages, in either subtitled or dubbed versions. Please note that encoding and subtitling or dubbing costs should be included in production budgets and it is deemed to be the Producer's responsibility to ensure that both versions are produced. Dubbing costs included in the Production budget will not be eligible for funding under the Canada Feature Film Fund (CFFF) Marketing Program.

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<sup>12</sup> All contribution amounts are subject to the overall availability of funds and the number of projects supported.



## **7. APPLICATION PROCESS**

### **7.1. Industry Partner Stream**

The application process under the Partner Stream is composed of two steps:

#### **Step 1: Recommendation by a Designated Partner**

Each Designated Partner may recommend **one** feature film for each component under which the partner is eligible.

In order to encourage submissions of Indigenous projects, all partners are eligible to recommend an Indigenous project that meets the eligibility criteria defined in section 2.3.2.

Designated Partners must submit their recommendation to Telefilm through [Dialogue](#) by the deadline specified on [Telefilm's website](#).

#### **Step 2: Application**

Teams whose projects have been determined eligible by Telefilm to proceed to the application stage must apply using [Dialogue](#) with an incorporated company (applicant company). It is the responsibility of the applicant to complete the application process and provide any supporting documents required by Telefilm. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Failure to provide supporting documentation will result in the application being removed from the evaluation process.

Projects that have been recommended by Designated Partners and have been determined eligible by Telefilm to proceed to the application stage are not guaranteed Telefilm financing. The key creative teams of these projects must also meet the criteria set out in sub-section 2.1.1 and must provide further documentation as requested by Telefilm at this stage.

### **7.2. Festival Selection Stream and Stream for Underrepresented Filmmakers**

Applicants who are eligible to these Streams can submit an application directly to Telefilm via [Dialogue](#) by the deadline specified on Telefilm's website.

Please visit Telefilm's [website](#) for further details on how to apply.

## **8. GENERAL INFORMATION**

While compliance with the guidelines is a prerequisite to eligibility for funding, compliance 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 of these guidelines to ensure that its funding is provided to those projects that meet its spirit and intent. In all questions of interpretation of either these guidelines, or the spirit and intent of this Program, Telefilm's 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](#).

**APPENDIX A**  
**LIST OF ELIGIBLE FESTIVALS FOR THE FESTIVAL SELECTION STREAM**

- Anney International Animated Film Festival
- American Indian Film Festival
- Venice Film Festival
- Berlin International Film Festival
- Cannes Film Festival
- Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival
- Sundance Film Festival
- Locarno Film Festival
- International Short Film Festival Oberhausen
- Tampere Film Festival
- Telluride Film Festival
- Valladolid International Film Festival
- South by Southwest
- Slamdance Film Festival
- Festival International du Film Francophone de Namur
- Tribeca Film Festival