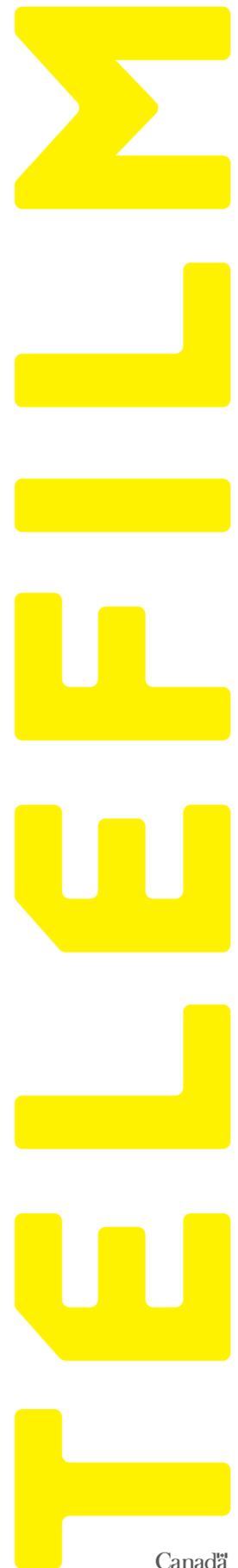


# **TALENT TO WATCH PROGRAM**

FUNDING OF FIRST FEATURE FILMS AND WEB PROJECTS  
FROM EMERGING FILMMAKERS

GUIDELINES APPLICABLE AS OF DECEMBER 19, 2019



## PROGRAM SUMMARY

The *Talent to Watch Program – Funding of First Feature Films and Web Projects from Emerging Filmmakers* (the “Program”) aims to support a diverse array of emerging filmmakers<sup>1</sup>, and accelerate their career development by giving them the opportunity, and the autonomy, to create their first feature film or web series.

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, or web series. Ultimately, the goal for these projects will be to gain an audience and critical attention, primarily via digital platforms, but also through film festivals, theatrical release and broadcast.

This Program will provide financing for the production, digital distribution, and promotion of a first feature-length film or web series. Once completed, the projects must be made available to the public through one or more digital platforms (e.g. web portals, video portals such as YouTube or iTunes, video on demand, mobile platforms/devices).

Telefilm Canada’s (“Telefilm”) support under this Program will be provided through three separate streams: the Selective Stream, the Fast Track Stream, and the Festival Selection Stream.

Under the Selective Stream, financing will be given to projects chosen among those recommended by designated industry partners for each component of the Program. The different components are: the **Main component**, the **Indigenous component** and the **Official Language Minority Community (OLMC) component**. The list of designated industry partners for each component is available on [Telefilm’s website](#). 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.

Under the Fast Track Stream, financing will be given to projects directed by an emerging director having previously directed a short film that has won a prize at a recognized film festival (see the list of recognized film festivals and prizes in Appendix A).

Finally, under the Festival Selection Stream, emerging filmmakers whose short films have been selected at a festival listed in Appendix B will be able to submit a project directly to Telefilm for evaluation, without having to be recommended by a designated industry partner.

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

This Program intends to:

- encourage and support emerging Canadian filmmakers;
- support filmmakers who reflect the diversity of the country in terms of gender, Indigenous communities or cultural diversity;

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

- encourage gender parity in the audiovisual industry;
- encourage innovation and creativity at all stages of the production, distribution and promotion processes;
- stimulate the use of new digital distribution platforms and increase audience access to the works of new Canadian talent;
- increase the public's access to Indigenous and OLMC content through innovative distribution channels;
- recognize the success of emerging directors who have received international attention for their previous work.

## 1. SELECTIVE STREAM

In order to apply to this Program through the Selective Stream, Telefilm must first receive a recommendation from a designated industry partner.

Designated industry partners must recommend creative teams and projects that meet the eligibility criteria listed below.

### 1.1 Eligibility Criteria

#### 1.1.1 Key members of the creative team

The key members<sup>2</sup> of **all recommended projects** must be emerging talent, i.e. they must have previously produced, directed and/or written at least one short film<sup>3</sup> but cannot have previously held the same key position on a feature length film<sup>4</sup>. Note that producers who have previously produced **one** feature film that has received funding under this Program<sup>5</sup> will also be considered as emerging talent. Additionally, Telefilm will show flexibility in the eligibility evaluation of producers who have previously produced **one** feature film with a budget of \$250,000 and less<sup>6</sup>.

Furthermore, the key members must be Canadian citizens, within the definition of the Citizenship Act, or permanent residents within the definition of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

If the recommendation is made by a partner for the **Main component**, the partner must also confirm that the director of the recommended project is a recent alumni<sup>7</sup> from one of the partner's production programs, an active member<sup>8</sup> of the partner's film cooperative or, in the case of a film festival partner, has participated in an incubator offered by that festival.

<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> A film of 75 minutes or more.

<sup>5</sup> Note that this Program was previously called the Micro-Budget Production Program.

<sup>6</sup> It is important to contact Telefilm prior to submission if the key producer has previously produced one feature film with a budget of \$250,000 and less.

<sup>7</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 5 years ago.

<sup>8</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.

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.

In addition to the above, if the recommendation is made by a partner for the **Indigenous component**, the partner must also confirm that the key members of the project's creative team are self-declared Indigenous people<sup>9</sup>.

If the recommendation is made by a partner for the **OLMC component**, the partner must confirm, in addition to the criteria applicable to the Main component, that:

- the project will be written and produced in English in Quebec; or
- the project will be written and produced in French outside of Quebec<sup>10</sup>.

### **1.1.2 Recommended projects**

The recommended projects must be fictional, or documentary audiovisual projects produced in English, French or an Indigenous language that are either:

- feature length films of 75 minutes or more; or
- any other type of narrative-based audiovisual content made in a format specifically designed for online audiences. These types of projects can be comprised of one or more segments which, in total, must be more than 10 minutes in length<sup>11</sup>.

All projects must be distributed on one or more digital platforms and must be completed within 24 months of receipt of an invitation to apply from Telefilm. No theatrical distribution is required under this Program.

The average budget for feature film projects is between \$ 150,000 and \$ 250,000, but, generally, it must not exceed \$ 250,000. The average budget amount for web series will vary based on the total duration of the project but should generally not exceed \$20,000 for a full 10-minute segment.

Note that the recommended projects must 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.

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<sup>9</sup> As per Statistics Canada's 2006 Census, self-declared Aboriginals or Indigenous people are those persons who reported identifying with at least one Aboriginal group, that is, North American Indian, Métis or Inuit, and/or those who reported being a Treaty Indian or a Registered Indian, as defined by the *Indian Act of Canada*, and/or those who reported they were members of an Indian band or First Nation. <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/ref/dict/pop001-eng.cfm>.

<sup>10</sup> 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 French.

<sup>11</sup> See [FAQs](#) for more details.

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, news reports;
- student films.

## 1.2 Recommendation and Evaluation Process

Each designated partner may recommend **one** feature films and **one** web series 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 1.1.1.

### 1.2.1 *Submission Materials*

As part of the recommendation process, the following elements must be presented by the creative teams to Telefilm using a file storage service (ex. OneDrive, Dropbox, Google Drive, etc.).

- 1) A completed screenplay;
- 2) **Presentation video:** a downloadable pitch video of a maximum of 5 minutes that will:
  - state the project's working title;
  - identify the genre, the type, and the length of the project;
  - identify the key creative team involved in the project and their individual track records (including samples of past work if applicable or relevant);
  - provide a brief synopsis of the story from beginning to end;
  - outline the creative team's vision/visual treatment of the material;
  - outline any other relevant information that sets the project apart (e.g.: personal connection to the story material, confirmed appearance by an established actor, successful crowdfunding campaign, relationship with VFX professionals or animators);
  - identify the target audience;
  - include 1-minute segment of the director's previous short films;

Note: the video must NOT include footage from other projects that are not the team's own work.

- 3) **Supporting material:** the documents listed below must be uploaded in pdf format:
  - Synopsis of the project, maximum of 750 words, which includes the main story developments, and tells the basic story from beginning to end;
  - Director's vision (up to three pages in length);

- A promotion and distribution plan (up to two pages in length) which identifies the project's audience (age, sex, sensibility, culture, etc.). It must also identify how the team will find and access this audience and why will they connect with the project;
- Creative team Filmography (producer, writer and director): submit a filmography using the template available on the Website, which will indicate training, education, experience, accolades, outline past projects and history of team collaboration;
- A production schedule (from pre-production to digital release) that will ensure completion of the project within 24 months of the receipt of Telefilm's invitation to apply, as described below;
- The budget top sheet for the project (see template available on Telefilm's website);
- Up to one page detailing any other information that sets this project apart (e.g.: personal connection to the story material, successful crowdfunding campaign, confirmed cameo or role by a well-established actor, established fan base on social media);
- Letter of support from the designated industry partner: a brief letter outlining why this team was chosen to represent the designated industry partner;
- Projects submitted under the Indigenous component and all other projects with Indigenous content shall address the issue of how the team sought to engage the various Indigenous communities that will be impacted by the project. Suitable means of achieving this may include the following, as applicable: letters of support from the community, letters of support from Indigenous advisors, contracts between the communities and the creative team for the project, community engagement plans, etc.

4) a link to previous work;

### **1.2.2 Evaluation Criteria**

With the assistance of an industry jury, Telefilm will review the recommended projects submitted by designated partners for each component of the Program to determine which projects best meet the following evaluation criteria:

- the quality of the track record of the creative team;
- the quality and originality of the creative materials submitted;
- the understanding of the marketplace for the project and the innovativeness of the promotion and distribution strategy;
- the feasibility and level of production readiness of the project.

Telefilm will also aim to support a balanced portfolio of projects reflecting a variety of genres, regions across the country, and different viewpoints. Telefilm will, for projects of equal quality, prioritize

projects whose key creatives (director and/or writer and/or producer) reflect the diversity of the country in terms of gender, Indigenous communities or cultural diversity.<sup>12</sup>

Note that a project that was not selected for financing under this Program can only be resubmitted once for consideration during another submission period for this Program.

### 1.3 Telefilm Application Stage

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 this sub-section and must provide further documentation as requested by Telefilm at this stage.

Creative teams whose projects have been determined eligible by Telefilm will be asked to incorporate a company which will then apply to Telefilm as provided in section 6.1. This corporation must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- operate as a film production company;
- own 100% of the rights of the project;
- be under Canadian control as determined under sections 26 to 28 of the *Investment Canada Act*;
- be entirely owned and controlled by the key creative team of the project;
- the Canadian creative personnel must obtain a minimum of 8 out of 10 points as calculated under the *Income Tax Regulations*.

## 2. FAST TRACK STREAM FOR FIRST FEATURE FILMS BY SELECTED EMERGING DIRECTORS

Telefilm wishes to encourage the production of first feature films by emerging directors who have previously won prizes for their short films at major film festivals. Applicants and projects who meet the following criteria will be able to apply directly to Telefilm, without having to be recommended by selected partners and evaluated by a jury.

If all eligibility criteria are met, the project will be automatically funded, subject to the overall availability of funds.

### 2.1 Eligibility Criteria

#### 2.1.1 Eligibility Criteria for Applicants

In order to be eligible to this Stream, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- they must be film production companies that meet all the criteria set out in section 1.3 above;
- the director of the project submitted to Telefilm must have directed a short film that has **won a recognized prize** at one of the film festivals listed in Appendix A;

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<sup>12</sup> See [FAQs](#) for more details.

- all key members<sup>13</sup> of the creative team must be emerging talent, i.e. they must already have produced, directed and/or written at least one short film but cannot have previously held the same key position on a feature length film<sup>14</sup>.

### **2.1.2 Eligibility Criteria for Projects**

Eligibility criteria for projects submitted under the Fast Track Stream are the same as those listed in section 1.1.2 above. However, please note that applicants can only submit feature length films under this Stream and that web series are not eligible.

As further detailed in section 6.2 below, applicants must submit their project to the Fast Track Stream within 2 calendar years of receiving their prize. Please note that, if an application is received after September 30<sup>th</sup>, Telefilm reserves the right to process it in the next fiscal year, which commences April 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **3. PILOT FAST TRACK STREAM FOR ARCTIC CHILLS PROJECTS**

Applicants and projects who meet the following criteria will be able to apply directly to Telefilm, without having to be recommended by selected partners and evaluated by a jury.

### **3.1 Eligibility Criteria**

#### **3.1.1. Eligibility Criteria for Applicants**

In order to be eligible to this Stream, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- they must be film production companies that meet all the criteria set out in section 1.3 above;

#### **3.1.2. Eligibility Criteria for Projects**

Eligible projects must be short films presented in the course of the Arctic Chills Initiative by the International Sami Film Institute and recommended by ImagineNative.

## **4. FESTIVAL SELECTION STREAM**

Under this Stream, eligible applicants will be able to submit a feature film project directly to Telefilm, without having to be recommended by a designated industry partner. The submitted projects will then be evaluated by Telefilm, with the assistance of an industry jury.

### **4.1. Eligibility Criteria**

#### **4.1.1 Eligibility Criteria for Applicants**

<sup>13</sup> The key members of a project's creative team are the producer, writer and director of a project.

<sup>14</sup> Note that producers who have previously produced one feature film that has received funding under this Program will also be considered as emerging talent. Additionally, Telefilm will show flexibility in the eligibility evaluation of producers who have previously produced one feature film with a budget of \$250,000 and less.

In order to be eligible to this Stream, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- they must be film production companies that meet all the criteria set out in section 1.3 above;
- the director of the project submitted to Telefilm must have directed a short film that was **selected** at one of the recognized film festivals listed in Appendix B in the 2 calendar years prior to the application to Telefilm;
- all key members of the creative team must be emerging talent, i.e. they must already have produced, directed and/or written at least one short film but cannot have previously held the same key position on a feature length film<sup>15</sup>.

#### **4.1.2 Eligibility Criteria for Projects**

Eligibility criteria for projects submitted under the Festival Selection Stream are the same as those listed in section 1.1.2 above. However, please note that applicants can only submit feature length films under this Stream and that web series are not eligible.

## **4.2. Evaluation Process**

The Festival Selection Stream will undergo the same selection process as the regular stream. Applicants who wish to receive funding under the Festival Selection Stream must submit to Telefilm all the elements listed in section 1.2.1 above by the date set out on the Program's website.

These elements will be evaluated by Telefilm, with the assistance of an industry jury, in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in section 1.2.2 above.

## **5. TERMS OF FUNDING**

### **5.1 Contribution Amount**

Telefilm's funding will be in the form of a non-repayable financial contribution<sup>16</sup> that may cover up to 100% of the project's financing. The maximum contribution amount is set at \$150,000 for feature films<sup>17</sup>, \$125,000 for web series of 75 minutes and more in total length and \$100,000 for short films submitted under the Pilot Fast Track Stream for Arctic Chills Projects.

The contribution amount for web series that are under 75 minutes in total length will be prorated based on the total number of minutes of the project<sup>18</sup>, each full 10-minute segment giving access to \$15,000 for a maximum contribution of \$105,000.

Telefilm's financial contribution must be used to cover direct expenses relating to the production, postproduction, distribution and promotion of the project, with a minimum of 8% of Telefilm's contribution being reserved for the promotion of the project.

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<sup>15</sup> With the exception of the producer of the project who can have previously produced **one** feature film project financed under this Program. Telefilm will show flexibility in the eligibility evaluation of producers who have previously produced one feature film with a budget of \$250,000 and less.

<sup>16</sup> All contribution amounts are subject to the overall availability of funds and the number of projects supported.

<sup>17</sup> Regardless of the stream under which the feature film project was submitted.

<sup>18</sup> As estimated by the applicant at the time of application.

Please note that all projects supported through this Program must be:

- made available in both official languages, through subtitling;
- closed-captioned; and
- available in described video, regardless of the distribution platform.

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

## 5.2 Availability of Completed Projects

Applicants who have received a financial contribution under this Program must deliver a completed project to Telefilm no later than **24 months** after:

- Telefilm's invitation to apply communicated to partners, for projects submitted under the Selective Stream;
- Telefilm's positive decision letter, for projects submitted under the Festival Selection Stream; or
- the application to Telefilm, for projects submitted under the Fast Track Stream.

The project must be made available to the public through a digital platform no later than 3 months after completion. For feature films only, the release on a digital platform may be delayed for an additional 6 month period in the event that the project is selected at one or more festivals or in the event of a confirmed theatrical release or broadcast.

Further, all projects must be made available to the public through Telefilm's channel on the National Film Board of Canada ("NFB")'s revenue sharing platform at the latest 18 months after completion. Applicants must make sure that their other digital distribution deals allow for this distribution on the NFB platform.

Finally, applicants will be required to submit audience reports that will report on audience viewership and accessibility of projects across various platforms.

## 6. HOW TO APPLY

### 6.1 Selective Stream

Designated partners must submit their recommendation to Telefilm through Dialogue by the deadline specified on Telefilm's website.

Applicants whose projects have been determined eligible by Telefilm to proceed to the application stage must apply using Dialogue with an incorporated company. The onus is on 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.

Please visit Telefilm's website for further details on how to apply.

### 6.2 Fast Track Stream and Festival Selection Stream

Applicants who are eligible to these Streams must contact Telefilm **prior** to submitting an application through Dialogue.

Applications under the Fast Track Stream must be submitted within 2 calendar years of receiving a prize at a festival listed in Appendix A. Please note that, if an application is received after September 30<sup>th</sup>, Telefilm reserves the right to process it in the next fiscal year, which commences April 1<sup>st</sup>.

Applications under the Festival Selection Stream must be submitted by the deadline specified on the Program's website and within 2 years of the selection of their short film at one of the festivals listed in Appendix B. Note that the deadline for this Stream will be the same deadline as for the Selective Stream.

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

## **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 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 AND PRIZES FOR THE FAST TRACK STREAM**

- Anney International Animated Film Festival
  - Le Cristal D’Anney – Short film prize
  
- American Indian Film Festival
  - Best Live Short
  - Best Documentary Short
  - Best Animated Short
  
- Venice Film Festival
  - Orizzonti Award for Best Short Film
  - The Orizzonti Medium-length Film Prize
  
- Berlin International Film Festival
  - Best Short Film – Golden Bear
  - Best Short Film – Silver Bear
  
- Cannes Film Festival
  - Palmes D’Or du Court Métrage
  - Special Jury Distinction – Short Film
  - Director’s Fortnight : Illy Short Film Award
  - International Critics Week: Leica Cine Discovery Prize for Short Film
  - International Critics Week: Canal+ Award for Short Film
  
- Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival
  - Grand Prix International Competition
  - Special Jury Prize
  - Audience Prize
  
- Academy Awards (WIN or NOMINATION)
  - Best live action short film
  - Best animated short film
  - Best documentary short subject
  
- Sundance Film festival
  - Short Film Grand Jury Prize
  - Short Film Jury Award: International Fiction
  - Short Film Jury Award: Non-Fiction
  - Short Film Jury Award: Animation
  - Short Film Special Jury Award (awarded to the director)

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

- Anecy 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