

Project Development Fund

Guidelines 2025/26



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Project Development Fund Guidelines 2025/26

Creative BC will provide funding for the development of independent film and television productions, on a project-by-project basis. Funding is based on a commitment from an eligible triggering agent (the “Triggering Agent”) to advance funds for the development of a specific project.

Applications will be evaluated on a first come, first served basis until the budget has been fully committed for the fiscal year.

Aims + Objectives

- The Project Development Fund enables B.C. owned and controlled production companies to build on development commitments secured from broadcasters, distributors and select funding agencies.
- The fund encourages support for existing and emerging domestic companies and provides financing in the form of non-recoupable advances¹ for feature film script development, dramatic or animated TV projects, or documentaries.
- The fund supports projects where B.C. companies have partnered with production companies from other countries.

Applicant Eligibility

Applicants must meet the following requirements to apply:

- Be a company incorporated in British Columbia or Canada with its head office in British Columbia. (Note: Companies extra-provincially registered in B.C. are not eligible.)
- The majority of the common interest voting shares of the company must be held by B.C. residents².
- Their primary business is the creation of motion picture audiovisual content.
- The principals, directors, officers and shareholders of the applicant company are in good standing (i.e. not in default) with Creative BC;
- The applicant company may own 10% or less of the shares of a broadcaster and may have 10% or less of its shares owned by a broadcaster or by a distributor;
- The applicant is in active development with an international partner, engaging in either an interprovincial co-production, co-venture, or a treaty co-production agreement³.

¹ For projects that meet the eligibility criteria of the **FIBC** program, the Project Development Fund is considered a grant that will “grind” or be deducted from the total cost of production when calculating the BC labour cap.

² BC residency is defined as either a Canadian citizen or Permanent Resident who has resided in B.C. for at least 200 of the 365 days prior to application and have filed income tax returns in B.C. for the taxation year prior to the application.

³ Projects that have *co-production agreements in place with a partner who has an agreement with an international equivalent to Telefilm Canada* may be eligible for Project Development funding and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Project Eligibility

Eligible projects may include British Columbia owned and/or controlled:

- Scripted feature films intended for theatrical release, broadcast, streaming or VOD platforms;
- Television movies, pilots, television series and mini-series intended for broadcast or streaming/VOD platforms;
- Short films and Web series⁴.
- Project must have attached to them a “Triggering Agent” that is arm’s length from the applicant company, and cannot be a related or associated company.
- A project intended for coproduction must be associated with an independent “Triggering Agent,” which is not related to or affiliated with the applicant company or coproducer partner.
- Eligible Project must be 100% owned and controlled / optioned (or *intended to be optioned* should the application be successful), by the applicant for a minimum of 12 months.
- Exceptions regarding copyright may be granted for inter-provincial or international treaty co-productions. In these cases, the BC applicant must retain the copyright interest as per the terms of the applicable treaty for international treaty co-productions and demonstrate that the copyright ownership is equal to the BC applicant’s financial, technical and creative contribution and control as specified in the co-production agreement entered into between the parties.
- The applicant must obtain the prior written consent of Creative BC if they plan to sell, assign, transfer, option or otherwise dispose of or encumber any right, interest or property of the applicant in the project, in any materials created during the development of the project or in the underlying rights agreements.
- If the eligible project is produced, the production must be produced in British Columbia by the applicant unless the applicant has entered an interprovincial co-production, co-venture or international treaty co-production as specified under Applicant Eligibility.
- A production that contains any elements of serious or gratuitous sexual violence or exploitation, obscene, indecent or pornographic content within the meaning of the Criminal Code, or elements which are libelous or in any other way unlawful, are ineligible.

⁴ Creative BC supports the production of short films and web series through the Project Development Fund, as these projects are seen as a “calling card” or development for future long form projects. Funding granted under this project type is limited during our fiscal year. Funding will be granted on a first come, first served basis. If the funding for this project type is depleted before the end of our fiscal year, and funding remains in the Project Development Fund, applicants will be invited to place their application in a “queue”. Applications will be processed if additional funding becomes available and based on their position in the queue.

Financial Participation

Eligible applicants may apply to Creative BC for a non-recoupable development advance of up to 50% of the committed cash advance intended for the development of the eligible project from one or more of the following *Triggering Agents*:

- An arm's length bona fide distribution entity (Canadian and international distributors);
 - National Film Board of Canada (NFB co-productions only; 100% owned and controlled NFB productions are not eligible);
 - A licensed public or private broadcaster (Canadian and international broadcasters);
 - Over the top (OTT) subscription-based services (Netflix, Crave, Amazon, Hulu, YouTube Premium originals, Vimeo On-Demand originals)⁵;
 - Independent Production Fund Web Series Development Packaging Program;
 - Telus Originals (development costs only);
 - Bell Fund Slate Development;
 - Telefilm Canada Feature Film Fund (CFFF) Development Program;
 - Canada Media Fund (CMF) Predevelopment;
 - Canada Media Fund (CMF) Indigenous Development and Predevelopment; and
 - Indigenous Screen Office (ISO) Development Program.
- The total development funding available to an eligible project for the fiscal year 2025/26 is capped at \$10,000, except for television series, which include dramatic, animated, lifestyle or documentary, which are capped at \$20,000.
 - The total development funding available to each eligible applicant (including affiliated and related companies) may not exceed \$50,000 in the fiscal year 2025/26.
 - The maximum cumulative funding an eligible project can receive throughout its development history is \$30,000, except for television series which are capped at \$50,000.
 - Applications must be submitted to Creative BC no later than 30 days after the date that the BC applicant receives the letter of commitment or agreement with the Triggering Agent. Exceptions to the 30 days may be given.
 - Advances by the Triggering Agent must be relevant to the current phase of development.

⁵ Please refer to CAVCO for comprehensive list of streaming and VOD platforms

Eligible Costs

The following eligible costs must be bona fide third-party costs directly related to the film or television project in development:

- Acquisitions of rights including option payments and license fees for platforms or formats;
- Research including the creation of a report, bible, outline and/or treatment;
- Photo and audio digitization/preservation;
- Writing of a script stage including editing and various breakdowns (i.e. outline, treatment, first draft, second draft, final draft and polish and applicable fringes);
- Production of a demotape including, but not limited to, creation of a sizzle reel, presentation pilot, webisode or storyboards;
- Creation of a character model pack (for animated projects);
- Pre-production planning, finance packaging and/or casting including creation of a casting reel;
- Travel costs necessary for creative work (e.g. interviewing, demotaping and travel by/to/from the director);
- Audience Development and Community Outreach Plan;
- Producer fees and corporate overhead can be calculated as a combined maximum 40% of the above approved direct development costs (the base budget);
- Business affairs and legal services associated with the above activities;
- Inflated, excessive, and/or unreasonable allocation of expenditures may be deemed ineligible and deducted from the proposed development budget.

Application Procedures

Applications are evaluated on a first come, first served basis until budgeted funds are committed for the current fiscal year. The processing time for a complete application is approximately 8 - 10 weeks.

Applicants must apply through the online submission form.

A non-refundable \$105 fee (includes GST) is due with each submission and payments are preferred by direct deposit. Please attach a screenshot of the payment to your application. Incomplete applications will not be processed.

Program Evaluation

The review and analysis of each application is based on program eligibility and does not include a creative evaluation. Successful applicants are notified in writing of the amount of the non-recoupable development advance awarded and will subsequently be forwarded a Non-recoupable Development Advance Agreement (the "Agreement") that, upon execution, shall be binding upon the eligible applicant and Creative BC.

Following analysis, if a project or applicant is deemed ineligible, the applicant will be notified via telephone or email of the reasons.

Terms of Funding

Advance of Funds

The advance of funds (the “Advance”) is non recoupable (except as noted below under Forfeiture and Default and within the Agreement) and will be released through one drawdown if the Creative BC commitment is \$5,000 or less; and if the Creative BC commitment is over \$5,000, over two drawdowns (75% and 25% of the Advance, respectively), according to the conditions laid out in the Agreement.

Respectful Workplace + Client and Partner Code of Conduct

As a catalyst for, and investor in B.C.’s creative industries, Creative BC is committed to supporting a healthy ecosystem that thrives in a culture of mutual respect, dignity and inclusivity that is free from any form of harassment, discrimination, and violence. All companies that work with, or seek funding from, Creative BC are expected to adhere to [Creative BC's Code of Conduct for Clients, Partners, and Stakeholders](#), implement policies and procedures for a harassment-free workplace, and comply with relevant laws. Creative BC is a signatory of the [Creative Industries Code](#) and expects all applicants, recipients, and partners to also adhere to this Code of Conduct. [Learn more](#).

On Screen Protocols & Pathways

It is a requirement that all filmmakers read and adhere to the guidance provided in [ON SCREEN PROTOCOLS & PATHWAYS](#): A Media Production Guide to Working with First Nations, Métis and Inuit Communities, Cultures, Concepts and Stories.

Being Seen | Black Screen Office

Creative BC supported the [Black Screen Office's “Being Seen – Directives for creating authentic and inclusive content”](#) study conducted to provide directives to everyone in the film, television and interactive digital media industries to help them commission, create and assess authentic content. We urge applicants to read and utilize this study as a tool to educate themselves, develop strategies for change, and enact real, systemic and long-lasting transformation.

Reel Green™

Sustainable production efforts in British Columbia were formalized in 2006 through the [Reel Green™ initiative](#), a resource centre with a collection of best practices to help productions reduce their environmental impacts and improve their overall environmental footprint.

Successful applicants to the Slate Development Program must adhere to sustainable practices throughout the development process of their project and beyond. We also require successful applicants to take the [Climate and Sustainable Production Training course](#).

In alignment with the Government of Canada’s commitment to net-zero emissions by, or before, 2050, successful applicants to this program will also be required to use industry level Carbon Calculators such as the [Green Production Guide Carbon Footprint Calculator](#) and/or the [albert Carbon Footprint Calculator](#).

Forfeiture and Default

A completion date is noted on the Agreement by which all deliverables will be submitted. Should all materials not be provided by the completion date, the eligible applicant forfeits any outstanding drawdown amounts and the commitment will be reduced by this amount.

Should an eligible applicant be placed in default- according to the terms of the Agreement, this limits the applicant, its principals and any parent or subsidiary companies from accessing further funding from Creative BC. In addition, Creative BC reserves the right to request immediate repayment of any funds advanced.

Questions?

Make sure to review the FAQ and Application Checklist on our website. If you still have any questions about eligibility, or require additional supports to submit your application, please contact:

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