

2024-25 INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Business Development and Capacity Building

The Ontario Creates Industry Development Program documentation includes:

- Ontario Creates Industry Development Program Guidelines (this document)
- [Ontario Creates Program Policies](#)

Applicants must review ALL of the documents listed above prior to submitting an application.

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The **Ontario Creates Industry Development Program** provides support to Ontario’s established trade and event organizations to offer initiatives, events and activities (“the Project”) that stimulate the growth of the cultural media industries. A Project includes all preparation, planning and delivery of an activity or an event with a defined timeline and outcome.

The program will provide funding to eligible organizations that are delivering strategic projects with long-term impacts towards expanding skills, business capacity, market share, sales, and innovation. Projects must demonstrate the potential for measurable results for Ontario companies that create and sell content in the book, magazine, film, television, and interactive digital media sectors or collaborations between Ontario Creates-supported sectors.

In both the Business Development and Capacity Building streams, Ontario Creates has identified two priority areas for 2024-25:

- Professional development and strategic initiatives related to:
 - Environmental Sustainability
 - Accessibility
- Mentorship and training opportunities for mid-career professionals, particularly those from equity-deserving communities

Funding is provided in the form of direct grants towards the costs of eligible projects. Contributions are non-refundable. Funding may not exceed 75% of the total approved budget.

Applicants must demonstrate clear, sustainable outcomes which align with the objectives of the applicable Industry Development Program.

Ontario Creates is committed to:

- supporting diversity and gender parity;
- providing enhanced accessibility support to people with disabilities, people who are Deaf, and people who face barriers in accessing technology to complete an application; and
- fostering respectful workplaces in all the sectors and companies we support.

Please see the [Program Policies](#) for more details.

1. Deadlines and Timeline Requirements:

April 4, 2024 5:00 PM ET

August 8, 2024 5:00 PM ET

Applicants must begin their project no later than 3 months after the deadline at which they submit their application, and have a total of 12 months to complete the project.

2. Eligible Applicants

- Applicants must be incorporated, not-for-profit Ontario or national organizations offering significant benefit to Ontario participants. At least 60% of a national organization's membership must be Ontario-based;
- Applicants must be recognized as a trade or event organization that serves the interests of one or more of the book, magazine, film, television or interactive digital media sectors. Music industry applicants are directed to the [Ontario Music Investment Fund](#), Music Industry Initiatives program; and
- Applicants must be established organizations in operation for at least one full year.
- Organizations planning to submit an application are required to contact the appropriate program consultant beforehand to discuss the eligibility of both the organization and the project.

3. Eligible Projects

Program Streams

There are two program streams.

1. Business Development – supports business to business (B2B) industry projects and business to consumer (B2C) audience development projects that create business leads, sales and relationships:

- Facilitating access to new markets and business opportunities, new channels, niche markets, exploiting new geographic targets; structured group or one-on-one meetings between buyers and sellers; business and/or content incubators with market participation, forums that connect buyers or investors with Ontario companies;
- Sales office and strategic export activities at global industry markets;
- Projects must provide targeted business opportunities relevant to the commercial interests of Ontario companies and can include potential for commercial transactions to take place.

2. Capacity Building – supports strategic projects that address challenges, opportunities or environmental changes that expand company capacity:

- Well-defined learning activities for industry professionals;
- Industry events at conferences, markets, and festivals and activities that a trade organization has clearly identified as a key priority for its members and stakeholders;
- Activities that provide strategic and organizational efficiencies that benefit the applicant organization's members and stakeholders;
- Mentorship and training opportunities targeted to underrepresented groups within the applicant organization's stakeholder group.

The Industry Development Program may support projects that fit in both streams. Please consider the primary focus of your project to determine which stream is most appropriate. If you are unsure of the stream, please contact the appropriate consultant for your sector.

Overall Eligibility Criteria

- Projects must be targeted at Ontario Creates' clients in the book, magazine, film, television or interactive digital media sectors and/or any combination of these sectors;
- Projects should take place in Ontario; however, activities may take place elsewhere provided the project will have significant benefit to Ontario companies;
- Applications must include measurable targets and outcomes to determine the success of the project. Priority results include the number of Ontario participants; the number of new business leads and opportunities generated; and the value of actual and anticipated sales, pre-sales and licensing agreements generated by the project;
- Applicants must demonstrate the feasibility of their financing plan.

Annual projects must reapply for subsequent funding. Previously supported projects are not guaranteed future funding.

Ontario Creates expects applicants who host event-based projects to choose accessible venues and offer accommodations to Deaf persons and persons with disabilities. More information on the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act can be found here: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/05a11>

4. Funding Level and Budget

Contributions are non-refundable. Funding may not exceed 75% of the approved budget and will generally range from \$5,000 to \$35,000. Requests for higher amounts must be discussed with the appropriate program consultant (see page 11) prior to application.

For projects that include participation of and benefit to industry stakeholders outside of Ontario, the funding request must be in direct proportion to the percentage of Ontario stakeholders involved. E.g. for a project where only 50% of the participants are Ontario-based, the funding request should not exceed 50% of the budget.

Eligible Administrative Costs

- Capped at 15% of the budget, costs may include:
 - Office space/rent and corporate services directly related to the project; including utilities, payroll service costs, couriers, photocopying, use of office equipment, rental of office space and other organization overhead costs. The definition of an administrative cost is at the discretion of Ontario Creates;
 - Labour that supports the administration of the activity (management oversight, accounting etc.).

Eligible Labour Costs

- Labour directly related to the execution of the activity (in-house and contract positions calculated at a fair market rate).

Eligible Capital Costs

- Capped at 15% of the budget, costs may include:
 - Equipment and Materials: if purchased, amortization must be calculated using the straight-line method with a prescribed useful life of 24 months; if rented, actual rental cost;
 - Software: 50% of the cost or the amortization expense using the straight-line method with a prescribed useful life of 12 months (whichever is less).

Other Important Information

- All costs with the exception of labour and administration must be paid to unrelated parties.

Ineligible Expenses

The following expenses are ineligible:

- Expenses incurred outside of the approved activity period;
- Expenses that were not in the original budget and which did not receive pre-approval by Ontario Creates;
- Expenses incurred prior to the application being submitted;
- Labour costs not directly related to the activity;
- Staff benefit costs;
- Real estate costs and leasehold improvements;
- Capital costs related to permanent structures (e.g., materials, labour, land acquisition, purchase of equipment for project construction, any rehabilitation or retrofit of existing infrastructure assets);
- Cost of alcoholic beverages;
- Fees relating to the compilation (notice-to-reader), review, or audit of applicant financial statements;
- Cost of General Liability insurance (however, the cost of specific event insurance is eligible);
- Sales Taxes: Taxes that are recoverable by the recipient may not be claimed as an eligible cost on the Activity Budget. Examples of taxes that are recoverable include GST/HST, PST, VAT;
- Related party transactions which did not receive pre-approval by Ontario Creates.

Budget and Financing Plan

Applicants are required to submit a budget and financing plan on the [template](#) provided.

The funding from the Industry Development Program can represent up to a maximum of 75% of the total budget, with the remaining 25% of the budget from the applicant and/or third parties including other government sources, and/or partners. Applicants bringing a higher percentage of non-government funding will be considered more favourably.

If outside services are required for the activity, it is advisable to include quotes as backup.

The financing plan must match the budget. Funding from other sources, including the applicant, must be identified in the financing plan.

Specifically, the financing component of the budget must indicate all sources and amounts from:

- Corporate investment (cash in the bank);
- Financed investment (e.g., line of credit, investors);
- Projected revenue derived from execution of the activity;
- Confirmed funding from government or other private funding bodies; and
- Anticipated funding from government or other funding bodies – including the request for Industry Development Program funding.

Confirmed funding from other sources should be supported by appropriate documentation (i.e. letter of commitment or contract from the funding source).

Financing from public/private funding agencies/bodies does not need to be confirmed at the time of application. However, unconfirmed funding from these sources should be supported with information, timelines and documentation to demonstrate the applicant's level of confidence in receiving such funding. For example, a company would include the last approval letter from the funding body, along with a projection of how much the company hopes to receive in the next round and an estimated date of notification from the funding body.

5. Application Process

- Organizations planning to submit an application are required to contact the appropriate program consultant beforehand to discuss the eligibility of both the organization and the activity at least three weeks before the application deadline;
- There are two application deadlines for this program. Applications should be submitted by the deadline prior to the start date of the proposed activity;
- Organizations can only include one project per application, however an organization may submit more than one application per deadline, and may submit applications at both deadlines depending on the start time of their project activities;
 - Applicants must submit their applications electronically through the Ontario Creates Online Application Portal (OAP) at <https://apply.ontariocreates.ca/> (please see [Program Policies](#) for more details.);
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to begin the application process early to allow ample time to compile and complete the necessary information;

Late applications will not be considered for funding. Prior discussion with Ontario Creates regarding the eligibility of an activity does not guarantee funding.

Summary of Application Requirements

The project plan submitted for review must contain, at minimum, the components below. A complete list of required information is outlined in the application form on the Online Application Portal (OAP).

- Profile of applicant organization including:
 - Overview of general business activities, short/long-term goals;
 - Profile and capabilities of key personnel;
 - Demonstration of diversity among senior leaderships and employees;
 - Explanation of company policies and/or activities that support diversity, equity and inclusion;
 - Track record delivering the same or similar projects.
- Detailed description of project including:
 - Objectives;

- Targeted participants including equity-seeking communities;
 - Outreach and marketing strategy;
 - Risks and challenges;
 - Alignment with IDP objectives;
 - Relevance to Ontario Creates stakeholders;
 - Timeline/Action Plan with Key Milestones;
 - Expected results;
 - Research to support the activity.
- Schedule with milestones and resources;
 - Budget and Financing Template (including evidence of confirmed financing and information demonstrating likelihood of receiving unconfirmed financing);
 - Articles of Incorporation for the applicant company (where applicable);
 - Financial Statements for the two most recently completed fiscal years (please see [Program Policies](#) for more details);
 - Documentation that confirms secured financing, such as bank statements, letters from funding bodies confirming funding.

6. Decision Criteria

The Industry Development Program is a competitive program. Before submitting an application, applicants must ensure they meet all eligibility requirements and that the project is suitable for Industry Development Program support.

Ontario Creates applies a lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion to the evaluation criteria for this program, and directs jury members to do the same. Applicants proposing projects and activities that support and reflect diversity are expected to tangibly demonstrate a genuine and sustained commitment to these equity-seeking communities. Ontario Creates may identify particular underrepresented communities within a particular sector. The provincial definition of diversity states: the dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to: ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion (creed), sex, sexual orientation and socio-economic status.

Applicants should also ensure that their application material clearly conveys the strengths of their proposed projects with respect to the program guidelines and evaluation criteria. The number of applicants that will receive funding and the amount of funding awarded is dependent on the quantity and quality of the projects selected, and the individual needs of each applicant.

After applicant and project eligibility have been confirmed, applications will be assessed according to the following criteria:

Criteria	Weighting	Considerations may include:
Relevance	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Relevance of the project to Ontario Creates stakeholders and the extent to

		<p>which it meets a demonstrated need and/or addresses an industry challenge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project includes culturally appropriate initiatives to engage with equity-seeking communities.
Feasibility	25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation clearly describes the proposed project, and includes a detailed feasible timeline, budget, and financing plan. • Application demonstrates thoughtful consultation, collaboration, and participation of equity-seeking communities.
Expected Results	25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which the project will have a positive impact on the applicant’s ability to serve its members and stakeholders and produce measurable results for Ontario companies. • Factors may include: number of Ontario participants; the impact on applicant’s members and stakeholders; commercial impact (projected number of business meetings, sales results, and increase in audience awareness); demonstration of benefit to the relevant industry in Ontario. • If applicable, expected results should identify outcomes of projects focused on inclusive activities and/or with equity-seeking communities.
Track Record	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track record of the applicant organization and experience delivering similar projects, including those focused on inclusivity or in collaboration with equity-seeking communities.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information about the applicant organization, including diversity among senior leadership, staff, or contract employees, particularly underrepresented communities within the relevant sector. Explanation of applicant organization's policies and/or activities that support diversity, equity and inclusion
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Ontario Creates may request changes to the budget or application prior to making a commitment.

Expected Results and Measurable Outcomes

Applicants are asked to describe the main benefit of the project to Ontario companies in the sectors they represent. Applicants should provide a list of all anticipated outcomes they will report on in their interim and final reports, should their funding request be successful. Measurable outcomes will be dependent on the nature of the project but may include:

Outcome	Business Development	Capacity Building
Number of Ontario attendees/participants at events/activities	✓	✓
Number of international participants/delegates	✓	✓
Increased revenues from international sales	✓	
Increased revenues for participating companies	✓	
Number of business meetings	✓	✓
Number of business connections/leads by participants	✓	✓
Sales success of activities/companies participating in the activities	✓	
Activities that stimulate knowledge transfer and business opportunities	✓	✓
Professional development opportunities created for Ontario participants		✓
Sustainability of project outcomes	✓	✓

Return on Ontario Creates investment (\$s)	✓	
Return on Ontario Creates investment (broader benefits to sector, increased profile, attendance at events, sector visibility, access to new markets)	✓	✓
Traditional media impact (metrics)	✓	✓
Online and social media impact	✓	✓
# of jobs created/or retained in the applicant organization		✓
# of jobs created/or retained by companies in the target sector/s	✓	
Degree to which project engages in inclusive activities and/or with equity-seeking communities.	✓	✓

7. Successful Applicants

Funding

60% paid on execution of Ontario Creates agreement and 40% at the completion of the activity and receipt of a final report.

Accessibility

Successful applicants who are Deaf or otherwise disabled may be eligible for supplementary funds for accessibility expenses required to complete their project deliverables.

Insurance

Recipient companies are required to carry Commercial General Liability Insurance. Please see [Program Policies](#) for more details.

Contract Template

On acceptance into the program, the recipient company is required to sign a standard Ontario government agreement covering the terms of their participation in the program including providing Ontario Creates with permission to use the project and delivery materials for promotional purposes. Please see [Program Policies](#) for more details.

Changes to the Project

Ontario Creates must be notified of any significant changes to the project as defined in the contract and if applicable, changes will require consent of Ontario Creates.

Reporting Criteria

Recipient companies are required to provide Ontario Creates with a satisfactory report evaluating the completed project. Specific report requirements will be outlined in the

Ontario Creates agreement but generally are expected to include those mentioned in the Expected Results section of the application and the Program Results and Outcomes section of the reporting template, and the following:

- Short term actual measurable results against projected original targets;
- Strategy for capturing longer term results where possible;
- Sustainability of activity;
- Number and list of participants, with identification of Ontario participants;
- Assessment of effectiveness in meeting the project objectives and those of the Industry Development Program;
- Summary of participants' exit questionnaires where applicable to the project;
- A Final Cost Report and Financing Statement is required for all projects supported by Ontario Creates. Please see [Program Policies](#) for more details.

For More Information

General program inquiries should be directed to the appropriate Coordinator, Industry Development.

For: Film and Television

Phone: 416-642-6695

Email:

programs@ontariocreates.ca

For: Books and Magazines

Phone: 416-642-6652

Email:

programs2@ontariocreates.ca

For: Interactive Digital Media

Phone: 416-642-6697

Email:

idmfund@ontariocreates.ca

To discuss an application

For specific information please contact the appropriate Industry Development Consultant:

Book Publishing: Bianca Spence bspence@ontariocreates.ca

Film and Television: Karam Masri kmasri@ontariocreates.ca

Interactive Digital Media: Danielle Hébert dhebert@ontariocreates.ca or Kim Gibson kgibson@ontariocreates.ca

Magazine Publishing: Matt Hilliard-Forde mhilliard-forde@ontariocreates.ca

Ontario Creates

An agency of the Ontario Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries Ontario Creates facilitates economic development opportunities for Ontario's cultural media industries including the book publishing, film and television, interactive digital media, magazine publishing, and music industries.