



# 2025-26 ONTARIO CREATES MARKETING AND DISTRIBUTION INITIATIVE PROGRAM

For Feature Film and Digital Series

**Deadline: Applications accepted on a continuous basis to  
December 18, 2025 at 5:00 PM ET**

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The Marketing and Distribution Initiative (MDI) documentation includes:

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

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

This program is only open to projects that have received support through the **Ontario Creates Film Fund** through the **Drama or Documentary Production stream OR Ontario Creates IP Fund (Linear) - Production**.

Digital Series projects that received Production support through the IDM Fund – Video Content (Linear) Program must go through the [Discoverability and Commercialization Program](#) for marketing support.

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The Marketing and Distribution Initiative (MDI) is designed to increase the visibility and commercial success of linear projects that have received Production funding from Ontario Creates, leading up to and during their commercial release.

This initiative is intended to support strategies and tactics that are an extension of traditional marketing and distribution activities and/or innovative exploitation strategies that enhance and build audience and revenue. These strategies and tactics can work independently and/or in conjunction with pre-existing distributor and licensor strategies.

The objectives of the MDI are to:

- support producers with marketing and distribution costs for linear projects;
- support producer-initiated marketing and distribution activities in place of or that complement those of their distributor/licensor; and
- build awareness of Ontario screen content producers and productions, drive sales and increase exposure of Ontario linear projects to a broader audience.

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/activities that support, reflect and strengthen diversity and gender parity in Ontario are expected to tangibly demonstrate a genuine and sustained commitment to these equity-deserving communities. Ontario Creates may identify particular underrepresented communities within a sector. The provincial definition of diversity includes, but is 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. In assessment of all projects, Ontario Creates uses and directs industry jurors to refer to key resources: On Screen Protocols and Pathways: <https://iso-bea.ca/advocacy-resources/on-screen-protocols-pathways/> and Being Seen: Directive for Creating Authentic and Inclusive Content: <https://www.beingseen.ca/>.

Ontario Creates is committed to fostering respectful workplaces in all sectors and companies we support. Please see [Program Policies](#) for more details, including required respectful workplace Applicant Affidavit.

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 [Program Policies](#) for important details.

## 1. Deadline

Applications will be accepted on a continuous basis until December 18, 2025 at 5:00 PM ET.

Applicants are encouraged to apply for Marketing Support at minimum eight weeks prior to the planned official release date of the project.

Decisions will be communicated to applicants within 4 to 6 weeks of application submission.

## 2. Applicant Eligibility

Applicants must be recent, successful recipients of the Ontario Creates Film Fund through the Drama or Documentary Production stream OR Ontario Creates IP Fund (Linear) - Production. Eligible projects must be completed, delivered or close to delivery and undertaking domestic release. Projects that have been officially released<sup>1</sup> are not eligible for this initiative.

To be eligible, the project's commercial release date must be slated to occur between April 1, 2025 and March 31, 2026.

## 3. Eligible Activities

Eligible activities are those that build awareness of the title and enhance its value in domestic sales channels including theatrical, broadcast and digital across all potential platforms. The activities should complement and leverage the functions of a distributor where a distribution agreement is in place and work alongside licensor promotional strategies as applicable. Activities must be detailed in a Marketing and Distribution Plan that outlines the overall strategy for the project across all platforms and identifies the respective roles of the Producer and the Distributor (if there is one).

## 4. Eligible Costs

Eligible costs are those costs incurred by the Producer that are integral to the Marketing and Distribution Plan for the release. These can be internal costs allocated to staff time, expenses directly in support of marketing activities, direct costs of goods and services, and costs related to hiring a third party contractor. Activities and associated costs must be within a **defined 6 month period surrounding the official release** .

Eligible expenses may include, but are not limited to:

- Festival screenings (within the applicable 6 month expenditure window), private screenings, test screenings, red carpet "event" screenings, other publicity events and innovative marketing strategies;

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<sup>1</sup> 'officially released' refers to the date that a project has been delivered and entered into commercial exploitation for public viewing and sales. Festival and premiere screenings are not considered officially released.

- Travel for talent (physical and virtual), producers and key creatives to attend marketing events and screenings for promotional purposes (i.e. festivals, premieres, press days and other marketing events);
- Publicists, social media managers and marketing agents;
- Design and production of marketing materials digital and physical: EPK, website, trailers, giveaways, posters;
- Advertising: online, print, social, other; and
- Versioning into alternative languages

#### Ineligible Costs

- Costs incurred directly by the Distributor or licensor;
- Costs covered by other entities (such as Telefilm);
- Expenses incurred prior to submission of the application; and
- Cost of alcohol.

### **5. Funding Levels**

Companies may apply for up to \$25,000, capped at 75% of the total marketing budget. Minimum contribution is \$5,000.

Please note, funding is limited for the MDI program and applications will be evaluated as they are submitted on a first-come first-served basis.

### **6. Application Requirements**

Eligible applicants must submit their application to Ontario Creates electronically through the Online Application Portal (OAP). The application must provide details of the marketing strategies and activities, a proposed budget, a financing plan to support the budget and expected results and outcomes of the activities proposed within the application.

#### **Budget and Financing**

- The MDI will support up to 75% of the marketing activities contained in the Marketing and Distribution Plan budget;
- The remaining 25% must include a minimum 10% cash contribution from the production company/producer. General administration costs are capped at 15% of the total M&D budget;
- Applicants may claim eligible M&D costs for a defined period of up to 6 months. The applicant must identify the start and end dates of their activities. Ontario Creates will only allow expenses within the indicated six month period;
- Realistically valued “in-kind” services may be included in the financing plan for the marketing activities. In-kind or deferred labour costs cannot exceed 15% of the total budget; and
- Ongoing operational costs are not eligible budget items for this program.

It is imperative that applications include detailed responses to all questions listed within the application and that all required materials be provided.

## 7. Submitting Your Application

- Applicants must submit their application to Ontario Creates electronically through the Online Application Portal (OAP) at <https://apply.ontariocreates.ca/>;
- Applications must be received electronically via the OAP system no later than 5:00 PM ET on the applicable deadline;
- Applications that are received after the deadline will not be considered;
- Applications will be reviewed by Ontario Creates for eligibility and completeness;
- Incomplete applications will not be considered;
- Successful applicants must sign a contract with Ontario Creates within one month of notification.

## 8. Decision Criteria

This is a competitive process and availability of funds is dependent upon the number and quality of submissions; number and size of awards; and budget of the initiative for the fiscal.

Applications will be assessed on the following criteria:

Criteria	Weighting	Considerations May Include:
Well-defined <b>marketing and distribution plan</b> which clearly articulates the proposed strategy and how the objectives will be met, with realistic goals and anticipated ROI	50%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are the goals clearly stated?</li><li>• Are the goals realistic and achievable?</li><li>• Is it transparent how the objectives will be met?</li><li>• Will the project generate a positive return on Production?</li><li>• Is there a strong likelihood of critical acclaim and/or critical success?</li></ul>
Identified <b>market appeal</b> of the project, and its target audience. Thoughtful consultation, collaboration, and participation of equity-deserving communities	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is there a clearly defined audience, supported by research/comps?</li><li>• Is there a rationale for the choice of the proposed activities, supported by research?</li><li>• Will the activities be effective in engaging the targeted audience and generating the expected revenue?</li><li>• Is there thoughtful consultation, collaboration, and participation of equity-deserving communities? Does it reflect diversity, particularly under-represented voices within its audience?</li></ul>

<b>Viability</b> of the plan and likelihood that goals will be met	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well-defined project scope and activities that align with a defined strategy</li> <li>Reasonable and detailed budget</li> <li>Realistic, detailed schedule with milestones and appropriate resources</li> <li>Comprehensive assessment of risks</li> </ul>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	

All Ontario Creates decisions are final. Ontario Creates reserves the right to alter program guidelines with general public notice to all potential applicants and to refuse any application for any reason. The number of awards and amount awarded is contingent on confirmation of Ontario Creates' annual budget. Ontario Creates is not required to make any minimum number of awards. Subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, all information contained in the application will remain strictly confidential.

## 9. Payments to Successful Applicants

Ontario Creates' contribution will be advanced at the following stages and on the receipt of all required documents specified in the agreement:

- 60% on execution of the Ontario Creates Contract for the 1<sup>st</sup> drawdown; and
- 40% on receipt of final report outlining the results and outcomes of execution against the plan, and a final cost report for the 2<sup>nd</sup> installment.

The final report must include a description of activities completed with qualitative and quantitative metrics such as:

- Measurable box office revenues (for feature films)
- Other sales and revenues
- Media impressions
- Other business outcomes which are directly/indirectly related to the M&D plan

## 10. More Information

<b>For Feature Film Production:</b> Anna Newallo, Program Consultant Phone: 416-645-8521 <a href="mailto:anewallo@ontariocreates.ca">anewallo@ontariocreates.ca</a>	<b>For Digital Series:</b> Danielle Hébert, Program Consultant Phone: 416-642-6687 <a href="mailto:dhebert@ontariocreates.ca">dhebert@ontariocreates.ca</a>
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Ontario Creates is an agency of the Government of Ontario that facilitates economic development, investment and collaboration in Ontario's creative industries including the music, book, magazine, film, television and interactive digital media sectors.  
**ontariocreates.ca**