



2025-26 ONTARIO CREATES INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY FUND

Linear Content Stream: Development and Production Guidelines

Deadlines: April 15, 2025 – 5:00 PM ET

September 25, 2025 – 5:00 PM ET

The Ontario Creates Intellectual Property Fund (IP Fund) – Linear Content documentation includes:

- IP Fund – Linear Content Guidelines (this document)
- [Ontario Creates Program Policies](#)

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

These are the guidelines for linear content projects (**feature film and digital series**). Applicants seeking support for interactive content projects (video games and XR experiences) should consult the [IP Fund – Interactive Content documentation](#).

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1. Introduction

The IP Fund is intended to drive economic growth in Ontario's screen sectors by investing in activities that support the production and exploitation of innovative, high-quality, consumer-focused content.

The objectives of the IP Fund are to:

- leverage Ontario Creates' investments;
- create jobs;
- grow companies (revenues, size, global impact); and
- expand diversity of content and companies.

The IP Fund – Linear Content stream supports Development and Production phases for:

- feature film; and
- digital series

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.

2. Eligible Applicants

The production company must be:

- a Canadian-owned and controlled organization¹;
- incorporated in Ontario or federally and registered in Ontario and if not incorporated at time of application, prepared to incorporate immediately if application is successful;
- Ontario-based¹;
- able to demonstrate a principal place of business in Ontario (Ontario-based) if the company has more than 365 days of operation for at least one year prior to the deadline;
- private sector/for profit;
- in sound financial position (including all associated companies); and
- in good standing with Ontario Creates.

If the applicant is a successful funding recipient, they must continue to have a principal place of business in Ontario for the funding duration.

Applications should be submitted by the primary corporate entity and not a single purpose production company.

The Individual Producer(s) must:

- be Ontario residents and Canadian citizens within the definition of the Citizenship Act or permanent residents within the definition of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Canada);

¹ See [Ontario Creates Program Policies](#) for definitions.

- for Feature Film:
 - have a Producer credit on a dramatic or documentary feature film theatrically released in Canada; a television movie, a dramatic or documentary series, or two one-hour documentaries that have been broadcast in Canada;
- for Digital Series:
 - meet the criteria for Feature Film as above or have previously produced a season of a digital series publicly released to an audience (see [Minimum Episodes](#) and [Exploitation](#) requirements below); or
 - have completed a Futures Forward training program.
- the lead Ontario producer applicant must be able to demonstrate a portion of IP ownership of the project.

Ontario Creates will consider applications from producers who do not meet the applicant producer requirements provided an Ontario based qualifying executive producer who does meet the above qualifications is attached to the project. Applicants must seek pre-approval of the qualifying executive producer by Ontario Creates prior to application. The qualifying executive producer must provide a signed letter outlining their involvement in and commitment to the project.

3. Eligible Projects and Activities

Development

	All Projects
Project	Must be intended to meet the Production eligibility requirements below.
Activities	Must commence after the application has been submitted. Must be completed within 15 months of notification of the decision.
Stages	All stages of development activities are eligible for support. Projects may be supported <u>one time only</u> through the Development stream. Activities may include one or more of the following phases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Story Optioning – First Option or Option Renewal • Treatment to Final Draft • Polish and Package
Expenses	Eligible development expenses include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option fees, including those for literary work; • Research costs; • Writer and story editor fees; • Story consultant fees; • Community or Diversity consultant fees; • Casting fees and expenses; • Location scouting; • Demo reel; • Sustainability research/planning for an environmentally-friendly set; • Producer’s fees and corporate overhead; • Legal and administrative fees;

Production

	Drama (incl. Animation)	Documentary	Digital Series
Minimum Budget	\$1 million	\$500,000	
Minimum length/ episodes	75 minutes		Three (3) episodes
Principal Photography	Must commence after application submission. Must be shot in Ontario (excluding coproductions and factual content).		
CANCON	Must be either eligible for certification as a Canadian Production by CAVCO; as a treaty coproduction by Telefilm Canada and by coproducers equivalent certifying body; or eligible to receive Canadian Program certification from the CRTC.		
Exploitation	Productions with budgets <u>Less than \$3.5 million</u> without a confirmed Canadian distributor must include a marketing plan that demonstrates how the film will be commercially exploited in Canada, and internationally if appropriate. See Appendix 1. Productions with budgets <u>\$3.5 million and over</u> must have a Canadian distributor attached to the project. The distributor must commercially exploit the film in Canada, and internationally if appropriate. While not required, the application can be strengthened with a marketing plan. See Appendix 1.	Documentaries may apply without a Canadian distributor in place but must have a commitment from a Canadian broadcaster or streaming service available in Canada and include a marketing plan that demonstrates how the film will be commercially exploited in Canada, and internationally if appropriate. See Appendix 1.	Acceptable online platforms include subscription-based video-on-demand (SVOD), advertising-based video-on-demand (AVOD), free ad-supported streaming TV (FAST), hybrid video-on-demand (HVOD), transactional video-on-demand (TVOD), or other models, as long as the platform makes productions commercially available for viewing by the public via download or streaming. See Appendix 1.
Release	Theatrical, digital, or XR release		Digital or XR release

Costs supported through other Ontario Creates programs or initiatives will not be eligible for support under the IP Fund.

4. Budget, Financing and Timeline Requirements

The IP Fund is a last-in participant in financing and will provide a non-repayable contribution as follows:

Development

	All Projects
Request	\$5,000 – minimum request \$25,000 – maximum request
Funding Caps	Up to 50% of Ontario spend*
Confirmed Financing	All financing in addition to Ontario Creates must be confirmed at application.

Production

	Drama (incl. Animation)	Documentary	Digital Series
Request	\$400,000 – maximum request	\$200,000 – maximum request	
Funding Caps	Up to 10% of Ontario spend*		Up to 30% of Ontario spend*
Confirmed Financing	At least 70% of financing in addition to Ontario Creates must be confirmed at application. To calculate the 70% requirement of confirmed financing, exclude your Ontario Creates request or any financing under review from other recognized industry funding programs (Telefilm, Bell Fund, Independent Production Fund, Canada Media Fund, NOHFC, Shaw Rocket Fund, Eurimages, etc.) within the corresponding deadline/timeframe.		
Other Factors	Confirmed financing at application stage <u>must</u> include an investment from at least one third-party private or public source (not including tax credits)	Confirmed financing at application stage <u>must</u> include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an investment from at least one third-party private or public source (not including tax credits) OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrated market interest, presented in the Marketing and Sales Strategy (see Appendix 1) and/or through evidence of meaningful third-party interest 	

* Ontario spend is the portion of the budget allocated to Ontario residents for labour AND budget allocated within the province for goods and services.

All financing must be confirmed within 16 weeks of the application deadline and in advance of Ontario Creates' conditional award letter. Fully financed projects (excluding Ontario Creates) supported with appropriate commitment documentation at the time of

application will be prioritized in the decision process. If successful, additional documentation will be required to confirm project ownership and financing. The submitted budget for Development and Production must be accompanied by a Schedule of Minimum Commitment of Ontario Expenditures (SMCOE) on the Ontario Creates [template](#). The SMCOE has significant weight in the assessment of your project's application. (See section 6: Decision Criteria.) The SMCOE represents the benefits of the project to the Ontario economy which includes projected Ontario expenditures as a multiple of Ontario Creates' contribution.

- Total projected number of weeks of employment for Ontario residents.
- Weeks of work are calculated for Ontario residents working a minimum of 5 days on the production at a minimum of 35 to 40 hours within a single week. Individuals that reach the 35 to 40 hours a week in less than 5 days they can be apportioned ex. 2 days at 30 hours = .25 of a week. Day labour, regardless of role, cannot be included in the weeks of work calculation.

Please ensure that the information you submit on this form is accurate, complete and represents the estimated Ontario expenditures (labour and non-labour), and the total paid weeks of work for all Ontario residents within the eligible categories. (See Section 6: Decision Criteria)

5. Application Process and Evaluation

Applications must be submitted to Ontario Creates by 5:00 pm ET on the applicable deadline via the Online Application Portal (OAP) at <https://apply.ontariocreates.ca/>.

A list of required application materials is outlined in the OAP. Applications must include all requested documentation and adhere to page limits. **Applicants will not have the opportunity to add or replace documentation after the deadline.**

- Applications will be reviewed by Ontario Creates for eligibility and completeness.
- If the application is incomplete or ineligible it will not be further evaluated and applicants will be notified via the OAP.
- Production Applicants will be offered an opportunity to provide a brief project update on their financing plan and other key commitments one week in advance of the jury meeting. There will be no other opportunities for applicants to update any supporting documents or elements of their application.
- Eligible applications that include all the required documents will be reviewed and assessed by a jury of industry professionals and/or Ontario Creates.
- Decisions will be communicated to applicants within 16 weeks of the deadline.
- Successful applicants must accept and sign a conditional award letter from Ontario Creates within one month of notification.
- Ontario Creates reserves the right to withdraw its funding commitment should project financing not be complete within the negotiated time frame per the funding commitment, the project no longer meets one or more of the IP Fund's eligibility requirements or the project changes significantly from time of initial commitment.

Companies and their affiliates may submit up to two applications for Development and two applications for Production per deadline ranked in order of preference. Where more than one application is submitted, consideration will be given to the capacity of the applicant company to manage multiple projects simultaneously.

Projects that were not successful at a previous Ontario Creates funding deadline may be resubmitted with the permission of Ontario Creates provided substantial changes have been made. A project may be submitted a maximum of 3 times, after which applications will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. Projects are eligible for withdrawal prior to notification of funding decisions.

6. Decision Criteria

This is a competitive program, and it is anticipated that the total funding request will exceed the available funds. Applicants are advised to ensure that they meet all eligibility requirements before submitting an application. Additionally, applicants should ensure that their application materials clearly convey the strengths of their proposal in relation to the guidelines. The number of applicants who receive funding and the amount awarded will depend on the quantity and quality of the projects recommended by the jury for support and the individual needs of each project.

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/>.

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

Criteria	Weighting	Considerations may include
Track Record	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• company experience with similar projects• capacity, skills, knowledge and expertise of the team• diversity among senior leadership, staff and/or contract employees• evidence of company policies and/or initiatives that support diversity, equity and inclusion
Feasibility and Risks	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• clarity of activities and deliverables• accuracy of budget and strength of financing contributions

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suitability of project planning and timelines • mitigation of other challenges and risks
Creative Strength	25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • potential to result in a high-quality project • creative merit • comprehensive articulation of project components/scope • evidence that project supports, reflects and amplifies diversity with respect to content and audience
Economic Benefit	35%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • benefits to the Ontario economy - (see pg.5 - <i>Ontario Spend</i> regarding SMCOE). This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ projected Ontario expenditures as a multiple of Ontario Creates' contribution ○ total projected number of weeks of employment for Ontario residents • viability of the marketing and sales strategy
Total	100%	

7. Successful Applicants

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

Development

Successful applicants will receive the full amount awarded upon execution of contract. Applicants must also complete a final report upon completion of the project, including submission of final deliverables as per the agreement.

Production

Successful applicants will receive funding as follows:

- 50% on execution of the agreement
- 40% on the completion of principal photography or delivery of animatic and layout
- 10% on receipt and acceptance of the final cost report / audited statement of production costs and final deliverables.

Supplementary funding support may be available to support successful projects with on-set training and mentorship initiatives. Details will be provided to successful applicants.

8. More Information

For Feature Film Development: Amrit Randhawa, Program Consultant Phone: 416-642-6654 arandhawa@ontariocreates.ca	For Feature Film Production: Anna Newallo, Program Consultant Phone: 416-645-8521 anewallo@ontariocreates.ca	For Digital Series: Danielle Hébert, Program Consultant Phone: 416-642-6687 dhebert@ontariocreates.ca
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These guidelines are for the 2025-26 deadline only. This document is subject to change for future deadlines . Applicants are advised to consult the Ontario Creates website for any relevant Frequently Asked Questions documents and Ontario Creates IP Fund Bulletins for clarifications and alterations to these guidelines.

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

Appendix 1

Marketing and Sales Strategy Elements

Productions with a budget of up to \$3.5 million without a confirmed Canadian distributor and documentaries and digital series of all budget levels, are required to submit the following elements of a marketing and sales strategy. Productions with budgets \$3.5 million and over are not required to submit a marketing and sales strategy but are encouraged to provide one as an enhancement to their application.

The strategy must identify the critical and commercial potential of the production and how it will be realized domestically and internationally. The strategy should demonstrate how to build awareness of the production, drive sales and increase exposure of the production. References to market potential, target demographics, and sales estimates should be researched with regard to performance of similar types of productions. Proposed release and distribution strategies should be realistic regarding cost and experience of the team to execute.

The main elements of the Canadian and international marketing, distribution and release strategy including domestic and international festival placement, traditional media, social media, or other innovative strategies should be demonstrated across all potential release platforms.

Please include:

- A release strategy for Canada that is executed in partnership with a distributor or platform partners, or executed by the producer. A description of the marketability of different elements of the production (e.g. renowned director and/or screenwriter, established IP or movie franchise, confirmed cast, potential for success in a particular niche market).
- An evaluation of the production's market potential in Canada and key international territories across all platforms.
- The target audience for each potential release platform and the expected results for each platform.
- Strategy for domestic and international sales fulfilment (e.g. attendance at markets; a list of likely sales agents or buyers; or plan for other representation to ensure the production gets sold).

The Marketing and Sales Strategy will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- The suitability of the proposed strategy in terms of the market appeal of the production and strategies to reach the target audience.
- The realistic potential to execute on the proposed marketing and sales activities.

Appendix 2

Required Schedule of Minimum Ontario Expenditures Template

Download:

[SMCOE-2025_EN_FINAL.xls](#)