

# 2026-27 ONTARIO CREATES PUBLISHING MARKETING & DISCOVERABILITY FUND

**Deadline: June 1, 2026 – 5:00 PM ET**

The Ontario Creates Publishing Marketing & Discoverability Fund documentation includes:

- Ontario Creates Publishing Marketing & Discoverability Fund –Guidelines (this document)
- [Ontario Creates Program Policies](#)

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

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### 1. Introduction

The Publishing Marketing & Discoverability Fund is intended to drive economic growth in Ontario’s publishing (book and magazine) sectors by investing in marketing activities that elevate company revenues and job retention/growth. It is also intended to support emerging companies and DEI initiatives to drive overall industry growth.

The objectives of the Publishing Marketing & Discoverability Fund are to:

- leverage Ontario Creates’ investments;
- create jobs;
- grow companies (revenues, size, global impact); and

- expand diversity of content and companies.

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. Please note that Program Policies are part of the program documentation, along with these Guidelines.

## **2. Eligible Applicants**

Independent, Canadian-owned and -controlled, Ontario-based book and magazine publishers may apply for this program.

To be eligible to apply, the corporation must:

- be primarily a book or magazine publisher<sup>1</sup>, publishing at the time of application;
- be a Canadian-owned and controlled organization<sup>2</sup>
- be incorporated in a Canadian jurisdiction for at least two fiscal years;
- Ontario-based<sup>2</sup>;
- have minimum sales revenue of at least \$20,000 (calculated as the average of the most recent two fiscal years, see eligible sales revenue);
- provide financial statements for the past two complete fiscal years including a balance sheet and an income statement at time of application. Review engagement and/or audited financial statements are preferred; however, Notice-to-Reader financial statements will be accepted;
- be in sound financial position (including all associated companies); and
- be 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.

New companies who have completed at least 12 months of publishing activities may apply for up to \$15,000 in support through the Emerging Publishers stream of this program. Book or magazine publishers applying in this stream must meet all of the eligibility requirements above with the following exceptions:

- Be prepared to incorporate in a Canadian jurisdiction if the application is successful

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<sup>1</sup> See [Appendix 1](#) for definitions of book and magazine publishers.

<sup>2</sup> See [Ontario Creates Program Policies](#) for definitions.

- Have minimum sales revenue of \$5,000 (See eligible sales revenue)
- Have published at least one book in the past two years; OR have a minimum print publication circulation of 1500; OR have minimum website engagement of 5000 Unique Monthly Visitors (UMVs), or a minimum membership/subscriber base of 1500
- Provide financial statements for the most recently completed fiscal year (Notice-to-Reader and Compilation Engagement statements are preferred, but internally prepared profit & loss statements will be accepted.)

### **3. Eligible Projects and Activities**

Proposed marketing activities should align with the publisher's editorial brand and focus. Projects should aim to increase the discoverability of published content, maintain strong ties with existing markets/audiences (or businesses, in the case of B2B magazines), expand reach to new markets/audiences, and strengthen overall market presence. Eligible projects and activities may include, but are not limited to: social media campaigns, retail partnerships, collection of audience intelligence to optimize ad sales, author tours, subscription incentives.

Applicants may submit one application which can include multiple activities within the application. The budget should provide a detailed cost breakdown for each activity.

Projects must be completed within 20 months from the application deadline.

Proposed activities should focus on:

- driving sales and increasing publisher revenue in a tangible and measurable manner;
- increasing market presence, domestically or internationally;
- creating or retaining jobs in Ontario; and
- improving operational efficiencies and productivity.

*Ineligible Activities are those that are:*

- already underway at the time of submitting the application;
- receiving support through another Ontario Creates program;
- do not directly promote, sell, or grow the audience for the applicant's magazine brand; and
- routine materials or expenses such as catalogues, sales conference attendance, and existing staff costs which are considered a normal part of the publishing business.

#### **4. Budget, Financing and Timeline Requirements**

The Publishing Marketing & Discoverability Fund will provide a non-repayable contribution of up to 75% of eligible expenses.

Funding levels are based on the publisher's average eligible sales revenue over the two most recent fiscal years. (see [Appendix 2: Eligible Sales Revenue](#) )

Grants, funding and donations are not considered revenue for the purpose of this program and should not be included when calculating eligible sales revenue.

Publishers may apply for the following levels of funding:

Established Publishers	Eligible Sales Revenues	Maximum Funding Available
	Over \$1,500,000	Up to \$150,000
	\$1,000,001 – \$1,500,000	Up to \$130,000
	\$750,001 – \$1,000,000	Up to \$110,000
	\$500,001 – \$750,000	Up to \$100,000
	\$250,001 – \$500,000	Up to \$90,000
	\$150,001 – \$250,000	Up to \$80,000
	\$75,001 – \$150,000	Up to \$40,000
	\$20,000 – \$75,000	Up to 33% of eligible sales revenue
Emerging Publishers	\$5,000 – \$19,999	Up to \$15,000

Budgets must be submitted on the template provided and must include all costs through to completion of the project. No PDFs or alternate formats will be accepted.

#### *Additional Considerations*

- Capital expenses related directly to the project (i.e., hardware, software) may be included to a **maximum of 15%** of the total project budget and must be appropriately amortized.
- If outside services are required for the plan, it is advisable to include quotes and a rationale for the selection of the service provider.
- Realistically valued “in-kind” services may be included as part or all of the 25% costs that must come from sources other than the Publishing Marketing & Discoverability Fund.

#### *Ineligible Expenses*

- Ongoing operational costs;
- Costs incurred before the application was submitted;

- Salaries and wages of staff not directly tied to the project;
- Staff benefit costs;
- General office expenses (such as telephone, photocopier, computer); *Note: costs for long distance phone and fax, paper costs, couriers and other expenses directly related to the project may be included;*
- Rent or mortgage payments for office space; and
- Hospitality expenses.

The applicant must begin incurring expenses no later than 90 days after notification of Ontario Creates' decision. All activities must be complete, and expenses incurred at the conclusion of the program period (within 20 months from the application deadline).

## **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.
- 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.
- Successful applicants will be required to enter into a signed funding agreement with Ontario Creates prior to receiving any funding.

## **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.

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"> <li>• company experience with similar projects</li> <li>• capacity, skills, knowledge and expertise of the team</li> <li>• diversity among senior leadership, staff and/or contract employees</li> <li>• evidence of company policies and/or initiatives that support diversity, equity and inclusion</li> </ul>
Feasibility and Risks	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clarity of activities and deliverables</li> <li>• accuracy of budget</li> <li>• suitability of project planning and timelines</li> <li>• mitigation of other challenges and risks</li> </ul>
Opportunity	25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• potential to enhance company stability and growth, and content profitability</li> <li>• potential to reach new markets and audiences</li> <li>• relevance of strategies to promote author/title/brand profiles</li> <li>• culturally appropriate initiatives to engage with equity-deserving communities</li> </ul>
Economic Benefit	35%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• link between marketing activities and benefits to Ontario economy. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ return on Ontario Creates' investment</li> <li>◦ creation or retention of jobs in the province</li> <li>◦ Improvements in workflow, productivity, or cost savings.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• viability of the marketing and sales strategy</li> </ul>
Total	100%	

## **7. Successful Applicants**

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

Successful applicants will receive funding as follows:

- 60% on execution of the agreement;
- 25% on receipt and acceptance of an interim report; and
- 15% on receipt and acceptance of a final report and all deliverables outlined in the agreement.

## **8. More Information**

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These guidelines are for the 2026-27 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 Publishing Marketing & Discoverability 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](http://ontariocreates.ca)

## APPENDIX 1

### Definitions of Book and Magazine Publishers

#### *Book Publishers must:*

- select and edit manuscripts, sign contracts with authors or copyright holders, publish books under the publisher's own imprint, and assume the risks associated with their production and marketing;
- carry out three of the following activities primarily through its Ontario office: editing, production, marketing, sales, distribution or management.
- have 50% of the publisher's employees must be based in the Ontario office;
- have at least six Canadian-authored titles in print;
- have published at least two books each year for the past two years or at least four books total over those two years;
- distribute and sell their books through normal bookselling channels;
- earn more than 50% of total sales revenues from book sales;
- ensure that sales revenues of vanity titles do not exceed 25% of the corporation's total revenues; and
- ensure that 50% of the titles published during the last year the application have been written by authors who are neither shareholders nor owners of the company.
- In the case of affiliated companies and subsidiaries, Ontario Creates will accept applications from independent, Canadian-owned-and-controlled, Ontario-based book publishers for which the same person, or group of persons, holds or controls the majority of shares, but only where the applicant companies maintain full control over their editorial processes, have editorial autonomy from any other publisher applying for this program, and produce separate financial statements.

#### *Magazine Publishers must:*

- produce a consumer publication or a B2B publication;
- have completed a full 12-month publishing cycle and business year by the time of application;
- be actively publishing at the time of application and throughout the project period;
- present a clearly displayed masthead or contact page with a named editor and publisher;
- generate more than 50% of their revenue from magazine publishing activities;
- be primarily edited, designed, and published in Ontario;
- maintain an editorial function (e.g., commissioning, directing contributors, editing, proofreading);
- use an editorial calendar for content planning and publishing;
- present editorial content from more than one contributor;

- contain a majority of original content;
- contain an average of at least 75% Canadian editorial content (created or adapted by Canadian citizens or permanent residents);
- be published under a common title and follow a regular publishing/update schedule;
- publish at regular intervals (minimum twice a year);
- contain an average of no more than 70% advertising over the past 12 months;
- clearly distinguish between editorial and advertising/sponsored content;
- have a publishing revenue stream (e.g., subscriptions, advertising sales);
- meet the following circulation requirements
  - Print Magazines: Minimum circulation of 2,500 copies per issue (1,000 for group projects)
  - Digital Magazines:
    - Web-based: Minimum 15,000 unique monthly visitors
    - App-based: Minimum 10,000 active subscribers
    - Subscription/paywall: Minimum 2,500 active subscribers
    - Must maintain a valid URL or downloadable app
- meet the following publication standards
  - Print Magazines: Minimum of two editions published; average issue length of 25 pages.
  - Digital Magazines: Must present content in specified, themed categories and maintain a substantive amount of content (e.g., articles, videos, infographics).
- In the case of affiliated companies and subsidiaries, only one may apply for funding. Entities for which the same person, or group of persons, holds or controls the majority of shares with full voting rights, or has been shown to have control, will be considered affiliated. Where companies are not affiliated according to the above definition, to be considered non-affiliated a corporation must maintain full control over editorial processes, have editorial autonomy from any other publisher applying for this program, and must produce separate financial statements.

## APPENDIX 2

### Eligible Sales Revenue

Grants, funding and donations are not considered revenue for the purpose of this program and should not be included when calculating eligible sales revenue.

#### *For Book Publishers*

Eligible sales revenue is defined as the total of the following:

- The revenues for eligible titles (see below) by Canadian authors sold net of trade discounts for returns and allowances; and
- Revenues from the sale of rights and permissions for eligible titles.

To be eligible for inclusion in sales figures, titles must meet the following criteria:

- be Canadian-authored (written by a Canadian citizen or permanent resident);
- bear an ISBN given to the publisher, be published under the publisher's own imprint or under an imprint for which the publisher has acquired publishing, management and marketing rights;
- have a minimum of 48 bound pages, except in the case of children's books;
- be free of hate propaganda, depictions of sexual exploitation, excessive violence and denigration of an identifiable group;
- not be a vanity title (a publication dependent on financial contribution from and/or initial purchase by the author); and
- have substantive editorial content.

#### *For Magazine Publishers*

Eligible sales revenue is defined as the total of the following:

- Revenues for subscriptions
- Revenues from ad sales; and
- Revenues from events that take place under the magazine (consumer or B2B) brand.

#### *Ineligible publications*

The following publications are specifically not eligible for inclusion in sales revenue:

- calendars, agendas, or almanacs;
- coloring books or comic books; however, collections of cartoons in book form by Canadian cartoonists meeting all other criteria are eligible, as are collections of drawings, illustrations and other artwork by Canadian artists in book form;
- instructional books;
- university or college dissertations;
- conference papers or reports;
- government reports or exhibition catalogues;
- instruction books or manuals;

- publications containing primarily maps;
- workbooks, kits, activity manuals or educational games;
- reference books such as directories, index compilations, compilations of statutes, rule books, or bibliographies; and
- publications that are primarily musical notation.

## APPENDIX 3

### Goals and Key Performance Indicators

As part of the application process, applicants will be asked to submit goals and key performance indicators for their project/activities via Ontario Creates' Online Application Portal. An example of how to complete this section of the application is provided below:

Question: Goals and Key Performance Indicators

*Provide information on the goals you have for this project. At least one goal must be financial, and you must provide KPIs that have \$ values. If your application is successful, you will be required to return to this table when completing your final report:*

<b>Goal Name:</b> (Include each specific goal that you want to achieve)	<i>Mags Example 1:</i> <b>Goal 1:</b> Increase brand visibility and generate qualified leads for advertising opportunities
<b>KPI</b> (Break the goal down into separate KPIs so you can measure your progress.)	
<i>Mags Example 1:</i> KPI 1: Website traffic KPI 2: Webinar registrations KPI 3: LinkedIn engagement KPI 4: Advertiser inquiries	
<b>Where are we now?</b> (Your current situation in relation to the goal.)	
<i>Mags Example 1:</i> 1: Website traffic - X# visits/month 2: Webinar Registrations - 0 3: LinkedIn engagement - X# interactions/post 4: Advertiser inquiries - X#/month	
<b>In 15 Months:</b> (Desired KPI Status for the goal)	
<i>Mags Example 1:</i> 1: Website traffic - X# visits/month 2: Webinar Registrations - 100/event 3: LinkedIn engagement - X# interactions/post 4: Advertiser inquiries - X#/month	

**In 24 Months:** (Desired KPI Status for the goal)

*Mags Example 1:*

- 1: Website traffic - X# visits/month
- 2: Webinar Registrations - 150/event
- 3: LinkedIn engagement – X# interactions/post
- 4: Advertiser inquiries – X#/month

**In 36 Months:** (Desired KPI Status for the goal)

*Mags Example 1:*

- 1: Website traffic - X# visits/month
- 2: Webinar Registrations - 200/event
- 3: LinkedIn engagement – X# interactions/post
- 4: Advertiser inquiries – X#/month

**Goal Name:**

(Include each specific goal that you want to achieve)

*Mags Example 2:*

**Goal 2:**  
Increased revenue from advertising sales

**KPI** (Break the goal down into separate KPIs so you can measure your progress.)

*Mags Example 2:*

KPI 1: Annual advertising revenue

**Where are we now?** (Your current situation in relation to the goal.)

*Mags Example 2:*

1. \$X in annual advertising revenue

**In 15 Months:** (Desired KPI Status for the goal)

*Mags Example 2:*

1. \$X in annual advertising revenue

**In 24 Months:** (Desired KPI Status for the goal)

*Mags Example 2:*

1. \$X in annual advertising revenue

**In 36 Months:** (Desired KPI Status for the goal)

*Mags Example 2:*

1. \$X in annual advertising revenue

<p><b>Goal Name:</b> (Include each specific goal that you want to achieve)</p>	<p><i>Books Example 1:</i> Goal 1: Increase audience engagement and visibility of key titles by diverse creators through an author-focused digital marketing campaign</p>
<p><b>KPI</b> (Break the goal down into separate KPIs so you can measure your progress.)</p>	
<p><i>Books Example 1:</i> KPI 1: Website traffic to featured author pages KPI 2: Social media engagement (likes, shares, comments) KPI 3: Email newsletter click-through rate</p>	
<p><b>Where are we now?</b> (Your current situation in relation to the goal.)</p>	
<p><i>Books Example 1:</i> 1: Website traffic - X# visits/month 2: Social media engagement – Avg. X# interactions/post 3: Email newsletter click-through rate – X%</p>	
<p><b>In 15 Months:</b> (Desired KPI Status for the goal)</p>	
<p><i>Books Example 1:</i> 1: Website traffic - X# visits/month 2: Social media engagement – Avg. X# interactions/post 3: Email newsletter click-through rate – X%</p>	
<p><b>In 24 Months:</b> (Desired KPI Status for the goal)</p>	
<p><i>Books Example 1:</i> 1: Website traffic - X# visits/month 2: Social media engagement – Avg. X# interactions/post 3: Email newsletter click-through rate – X%</p>	
<p><b>In 36 Months:</b> (Desired KPI Status for the goal)</p>	
<p><i>Books Example 1:</i> 1: Website traffic - X# visits/month 2: Social media engagement – Avg. X# interactions/post 3: Email newsletter click-through rate – X%</p>	

<p><b>Goal Name:</b> (Include each specific goal that you want to achieve)</p>	<p><i>Books Example 2:</i> Goal 2: Increase sales of titles by diverse creators</p>
<p><b>KPI</b> (Break the goal down into separate KPIs so you can measure your progress.)</p>	
<p><i>Books Example 2:</i> KPI 1: \$ value of sales KPI 2: # of units sold</p>	
<p><b>Where are we now?</b> (Your current situation in relation to the goal.)</p>	
<p><i>Books Example 2:</i> 1: \$X sales 2: X# of units sold</p>	
<p><b>In 15 Months:</b> (Desired KPI Status for the goal)</p>	
<p><i>Books Example 2:</i> 1: \$X sales 2: X# of units sold</p>	
<p><b>In 24 Months:</b> (Desired KPI Status for the goal)</p>	
<p><i>Books Example 2:</i> 1: \$X sales 2: X# of units sold</p>	
<p><b>In 36 Months:</b> (Desired KPI Status for the goal)</p>	
<p><i>Books Example 2:</i> 1: \$X sales 2: X# of units sold</p>	