

2022-23 ONTARIO CREATES FILM FUND: MARKETING & DISTRIBUTION INITIATIVE (MDI) GUIDELINES

Deadline: Continuous, closes December 15, 2022 by 5:00 pm EST

The Film Fund: Marketing and Distribution Initiative documentation includes:

- Marketing and Distribution Initiative Guidelines
- [Ontario Creates Program Policies](#)

WHERE TO FIND:

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The Marketing and Distribution Initiative (MDI) is intended to assist producers of Ontario Creates Film Fund supported projects to make a meaningful contribution to the marketing and distribution of their projects 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 feature film projects;
- support producer-initiated marketing and distribution activities in place of or that complement those of their distributor/licensor
- encourage innovative ideas and strategies that are outside of the traditional M&D channels; and

- build awareness of Ontario filmmakers and productions, drive sales and increase exposure of Ontario films to a broader audience.

Ontario Creates values and supports diversity and gender parity at all levels and business roles within creative industries. We acknowledge that many communities continue to face systemic barriers, preventing them from participating meaningfully in these industries. 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-seeking communities*. Ontario Creates encourages applications from companies that are led by BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, or People of Colour) or Francophone individuals and applicants that otherwise meet the provincial definition of diversity.**

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

Ontario Creates welcomes applications from people with disabilities, people who are deaf, and people who have barriers to accessing technology. If you would like to request an alternative process or format for submitting an application, or request funds (up to \$500 per application) towards service providers to assist with your application, please contact the relevant Program Consultant a minimum of four weeks before the deadline. Support for application assistance is also available to First Nations, Inuit or Métis applicants facing language, geographic and/or cultural barriers. Services may include, but are not limited to, assistance to create an account and navigate the Online Application Portal; transcribe/edit/organize/translate applications materials; complete and submit application materials.

*Equity seeking communities are those that face significant collective challenges in participating in society. This marginalization may be caused by, but not limited to, attitudinal, historic, social and environmental barriers based on age, ethnicity, disability, economic status, gender, nationality, race, sexual orientation and transgender status. Equity-seeking communities identify barriers to equal access, opportunities and resources due to disadvantage and discrimination and actively seek social justice and reparation.

**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 socioeconomic status.

1. Deadline

Continuous, closes December 15, 2022

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

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. Eligible projects must be completed, delivered or close to delivery and undertaking domestic release. Projects that have been officially released¹ are not eligible for this initiative.

To be eligible the project's commercial release date must be slated to occur between April 1, 2022 and March 31, 2023.

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 film 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, both in person and virtual;

¹ '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 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.

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 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.

Applications will be assessed on the following criteria:

Well-defined marketing and distribution plan which clearly articulates the proposed strategy and how the objectives will be met, with realistic goals and anticipated ROI	30%
Identified market appeal of the film, and its target audience Thoughtful consultation, collaboration, and participation of equity-seeking communities	20%
Innovative, creative and appropriate strategy and activities to reach that audience	20%
Viability of the plan and likelihood that goals will be met	10%
Experience of the team to execute on the proposed marketing and distribution strategies Information about the company, including diversity among senior leadership, staff, or contract employees	20%

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 1st 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 2nd installment.

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

- Measurable box office revenues
- Other sales and revenues
- Media impressions

- Other business outcomes which are directly/indirectly related to the M&D plan

****The MDI contract will be with the same entity as the Ontario Creates Film Fund Production contract.***

10. More information:

Anna Newallo, Program Consultant

Phone: 416-645-8521

E-mail: anewallo@ontariocreates.ca

Ontario Creates

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