



**ROGERS**<sup>TM</sup>  
Documentary Fund

**GUIDELINES 2021**

**APPLICATION DEADLINES FOR 2021**

**Wednesday, April 21, 2021**

**Wednesday, August 18, 2021**

Updated February 1, 2021

# ROGERS DOCUMENTARY FUND GUIDELINES

Supporting Canada's tradition of excellence in documentary filmmaking and its producers

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## Objectives

Rogers established the Rogers Documentary Fund in 1996 to foster the growth of documentary film production in this country in both official languages. Its creation helps sustain Canada's tradition of quality, independently produced documentary projects and ensures that these productions are seen by the widest possible audience.

There is a distinguished tradition of documentary filmmaking in Canada. In fact, the term "documentary" was coined by John Grierson, founder of the National Film Board of Canada. A pioneer filmmaker himself, Grierson described the documentary as the "creative treatment of reality". In the years since then, Canada has played a major role in creating, nurturing and exploring the art and craft of the documentary film. Canada's image abroad has been shaped, in part, through our documentaries, and the talent of our filmmakers has received acclaim around the world.

To secure documentary filmmakers the opportunity to make their art, the Fund will provide financing to original, high-quality, provocative and/or controversial documentaries which are **licensed by a national Canadian broadcaster, cable or pay TV channel, or by an online platform that is available to Canadian audiences.** The Rogers Documentary Fund will inject up to \$2 million a year into documentary filmmaking in Canada.

There will be two funding deadlines per year. **Projects will be selected for funding ten to twelve weeks after each deadline.** Participation from the Fund will be in the form of a non-recoupable advance.

## Eligibility

The following criteria apply to all projects submitted to the Fund.

### 1. Requirements

- a. Access to the Fund is limited to individuals, corporations, partnerships, trusts and joint ventures who are Canadian independent producers.
- b. Official treaty co-productions qualify for funding.
- c. Co-ventures qualify for funding.

- d. Budget: There is no budgetary limit in order to qualify for funding.
- e. Licence fee: The platform licence fee as well as all service or equity arrangements must be applied towards the cost of production.
- f. Delivery: Delivery of the completed program may not occur prior to application deadline. Principal Photography can commence prior to application deadline.

A maximum of 25% of the Fund's annual allocation may be accessed by broadcaster-affiliated production companies.

## 2. Ownership

The beneficial ownership of the documentary must be retained by a Canadian resident.

## 3. Platform commitment and licence

Eligible applicants must have a commitment from a platform (streaming, broadcast or specialty cable) that is available to Canadian audiences. The platform must pay a licence fee of fair market value in exchange for the rights to that content. Eligible streaming platforms include\* but are not limited to: Netflix, CBC.ca, Amazon Prime, CuriosityStream, Sundance Now, Citytv.com, etc.

If a broadcast commitment is secured, the commitment must be from a Canadian licensed national broadcaster, cable specialty or pay television service, with a guarantee to broadcast in prime time. TV Ontario and Knowledge Network broadcast commitments qualify for the Fund.

\* List subject to change

## 4. Documentary criteria

### a. General criteria

For the purposes of the Rogers Documentary Fund, a documentary will be defined as those films or videos that employ a format which is characterized by most, if not all, of the following elements to create a non-fiction representation of reality that:

- informs and/or engages in critical analysis of a specific topic or point-of-view
- provides an in-depth treatment of the subject (may be meditative or reflective)
- is primarily designed to inform, but may also entertain

- treats a specific topic over the course of at least 30 minutes and, at maximum, feature-length (including commercial time)
- requires substantial time in preparation, production and post-production
- has an original narrative and visual construction
- has enduring appeal, and therefore a durable "shelf-life"

*b. Canadian content*

Documentaries must achieve Canadian content status with a minimum of 6 out of 10 points in accordance with the Canadian content rules as administered by CAVCO/CRTC.

*c. Acceptable formats*

Current events, instructional, magazine or talk-show style programs do not qualify for funding. Documentary mini-series are eligible for funding. *These productions must consist of no more than five episodes*, linked by a central thesis or theme. For funding purposes, mini-series will be treated as a whole, not as separate films.

*d. Closed-captioning and described video*

All documentaries must provide for closed captioning and described video in their budgets. We will require evidence upon completion of production and delivery that closed captioning and described video have been incorporated into all documentary films financed by the Fund.

*e. Theatrical releases*

Theatrical releases will qualify for funding provided they have been pre-sold to a national broadcaster or qualifying platform.

*f. Producer Fees and Corporate Overhead*

The aggregate of Producer Fees plus Corporate Overhead should be limited to 30% of B+C as per the Telefilm Canada standard budget form.

**Please note that a platform commitment licence fee that is conditional upon approval by the Fund will be considered unacceptable.**

## Financial Participation from the Fund

This Program is intended to complete project financing. ***The Rogers Documentary Fund will provide non-recoupable advances to a maximum of \$100,000 to successful applicants.*** Producers may apply for the full grant amount; however, the actual level of support for a particular project will be determined based on key factors, including the number of quality applications and available resources.

Two-thirds of the program's resources will be allocated to English-language productions and one third to French-language productions.

## Application Procedure

### 1. All Applicants must submit the following documentation with their application:

- Detailed industry-standard production budget and top sheet. Must include closed captioning and described video.
- Proposed shooting and production schedules.
- Script, detailed outline or treatment, including a description of the subject matter as well as the filmmaker's editorial and cinematic approach
- Detailed one-page project synopsis.
- Written commitment from a qualifying platform
  - broadcast commitments must guarantee a prime time broadcast within two years of delivery
  - online platform commitments must guarantee availability of the production on that platform within two years of delivery
  - broadcast commitments must include the broadcaster performance envelope commitments, if applicable.
- Evidence of relevant deferral, service and/or equity arrangements.
- Proof of committed financing to date.
- Detailed financing plan.
- Resumes and background information on producer(s) and key creative, including screenwriter and director
- If re-applying with a project, please identify any significant changes to the financing and/or creative materials from the previous application.

## 2. Funding Applicants

As well as the documents listed above, producers must provide proof of financing secured (short form commitments are acceptable) as well as a list of anticipated sources to achieve full financing.

Producers will be given 90 days from the date of a commitment letter from the Fund in which to finalize their project financing. If full financing is not confirmed within that time, the Fund's commitment may be canceled.

## Administration and Evaluation Process

### 1. Administration

Rogers Documentary Fund is funded by Rogers Communications Partnership and is administered by a federal, not-for-profit corporation incorporated under the *Canada Corporations Act*. The same corporation also separately administers the Rogers Cable Network Fund. Rogers Documentary Fund operates at arm length from Rogers Cable Inc. under the governance of an independent Board of Directors. The Board of Directors has sole and exclusive responsibility to make funding decisions and to supervise their implementation. The day-to-day operations of the Rogers Documentary Fund are overseen by an Executive Director who reports to the Board of Directors. The Fund office is located in Toronto. The Rogers Documentary Fund is a Certified Independent Production Fund (CIPF) as determined by the CRTC.

### 2. Evaluation Process

The Board of Directors will meet two times each year in order to make its funding decisions. **There will be two funding deadlines each year with decisions ten to twelve weeks later.** Deadlines will be strictly enforced by the Fund's administration.

If a producer is applying with a project to be produced in both official languages, and has achieved both francophone and anglophone platform pre-sales, the producer must specify to which program envelope (French or English) they are applying and why, based on the following criteria:

1. which platform(s) participated in the project's development
2. which platform has first window; and
3. level of commitment from respective platforms

While there will be no regional envelopes, the Board of Directors will remain cognizant of Canada's diversity of expression and will undertake to consider all of Canada's regions as well as minority language communities in its funding decisions.

The Board of Directors will review applications on behalf of the same project a maximum of two (2) times.

All interpretations of these Guidelines and decisions made by the Board of Directors are at the sole discretion of the Board of Directors. All decisions are final and are not subject to appeal.

### **3. Factors for Success:**

As per CRTC 2016-343 Policy framework for Independent Certified Production Funds, the following criteria will be considered when determining the potential success for a program:

- producer track record
- international pre-sale/financing
- creative team
- film festival potential
- audience appeal in Canada
- international audience appeal
- distribution

## **Successful Applicants**

All successful applicants will be required to submit further documentation to Rogers. This includes but is not limited to:

- Locked budget and financing structure
- Cash flow
- All final financing agreements
- Tax credit certificates or an opinion letter from an accounting firm
- Legal opinion on chain of title
- Liability, production package, and E&O insurance policies naming Rogers Documentary and Cable Network Fund as loss payee/additional insured
- Certificate of Incorporation and corporate info for production company

## **Information**

For additional information, please go to: [www.rogersgroupoffunds.com](http://www.rogersgroupoffunds.com)