

Over 150 participants joined TELUS Fund’s “[Building for Success](#)” webinars that took place in English on February 13th and in French on February 15th. This document provides responses to questions posted in the chat. We have grouped together similar questions that were not answered within the presentation.

Applicants are encouraged to review the full [2024 Program Guidelines](#) which include definitions of the capitalized terms in TELUS Fund’s responses below and other process and policy changes applicable to all applications submitted in 2024. If there are any discrepancies between the responses in this document and the 2024 Program Guidelines, the 2024 Program Guidelines will prevail. Answers to other frequently asked questions are available [on TELUS Fund’s website](#). You may also contact us at info@telusfund.ca.

1. Eligible Applicant

I have minimal production experience but I will be partnering with an experienced producer. I own the rights to the story, they bring the experience. TELUS Fund guidelines state that the Eligible Applicant must be “experienced in the business of producing comparable Programming.” Does this mean I need to sell my story rights to the experienced producer so they can be the Eligible Applicant? Is there any way around this? (Maybe, could my small production company be the Applicant and list the experienced producer as a Co-Producer?)

No, you do not need to sell your rights to meet TELUS Fund’s definition of an Eligible Applicant. TELUS Fund requires that the Eligible Applicant be experienced in the business of producing comparable programming due to the typically high level of financing provided by the Fund as an amount and percentage of the financial structure. An emerging production company can meet this requirement by bringing an experienced Producer or Executive Producer on to the project team or by entering into a co-production arrangement with an experienced production company.

Can NPOs apply, or can they only be considered as expert organizations supporting the project?

No, non-profit organizations are not eligible to apply for financing. The Eligible Applicant must be a for-profit taxable corporation (within the meaning of Canada’s *Income Tax Act*).

2. Eligible Project

Are there any topics you stay away from?

The webinar and 2024 Program Guidelines include a checklist to help you determine whether your project is aligned to the Fund’s mandate and the definition of well-being. Provided your project is aligned to this checklist the range of well-being topics is very broad.

Is there a min or max length for the sizzle reel?

An application for production financing must include either a professional sizzle reel, trailer, or demo that showcases the talent, the storyline, and the project’s potential to reach and positively impact the target audience. While there is no minimum or maximum length specified in the guidelines, typically sizzle reels and trailers are less than 3 minutes in length.

Would a short experimental film regarding mental health qualify if research supports it and an Expert Organization supports it?

Short films do meet TELUS Fund’s definition of Programming but they are typically not a good fit for financing from the Fund. Please refer to question [8 Check Alignment](#) below.

3. Expert Organization

For an Expert Organization, does a university generally qualify? Can a “Foundation” be considered an Expert Organization”? Part of the criteria for funding includes support from “qualified health professionals”. Is there a provision for Knowledge Keepers (traditional healers) within First Nations Communities?

TELUS Fund is unable to determine eligibility outside of the context of receiving a complete Expert Organization Support Form which provides information on the organization, the well-being issue being tackled in the project, and the types of services, programs, supports, or resources being delivered by the Expert Organization to Canadians struggling in this area.

Ask the Expert Organization to complete and send the [Expert Organization Support Form](#) to TELUS Fund at least 3 weeks before the deadline to confirm eligibility. If you miss this deadline, the Expert Organization Support Form may be included with your application for financing but, if not accepted by the Fund, the application will be withdrawn from consideration.

First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples who live in the territory that is today known as Canada continue to encounter barriers to accessing and using health services in Canada that are often not reflective of the worldviews or definitions of health they uphold. There is also a legacy of suppression of traditional Indigenous health knowledge and healing practices with the potential to improve health outcomes for Indigenous Peoples. TELUS Fund welcomes the opportunity to receive Expert Organization Support Forms completed by Healing specialists, Knowledge Keepers, and Elders who are recognized by the community for their skill in understanding and working within Indigenous cultural worldviews and providing Indigenous approaches to healthcare in the well-being area.

I'm not sure I understand the second definition of Expert Organization: “a combination of municipal and provincial Expert Organizations that together demonstrate a national perspective on the well-being issue”. Does this mean that organizations that are combined don't have to render specific services to Canadians and do they have to have a health expert within their organization? If we have several health professionals who are already associated with the project (doctor, etc.) do we also need to have support from a non-profit organization?

Applicants must ensure the Expert Organizations that support the project demonstrate a **national** perspective on the well-being issue. This can be achieved by obtaining either ONE [Expert Organization Support Form](#) from a **national** Expert Organization delivering services to Canadians across the country or a combination of municipal, provincial or regional Expert Organizations.

Individual healthcare professionals delivering services independent of an Expert Organization do not meet TELUS Fund's definition of an Expert Organization. Their demonstrated support may increase the competitiveness of your submission, but their [Expert Organization Support Form](#) will not be considered when determining if support from Expert Organizations demonstrates a national perspective on the well-being issue.

4. Platform

Is the Platform Support Form binding to the Platform? Do they have to commit to licensing the program before they even see it? If we are applying for development funding what are we expecting from them at this time? Can the deal memo be for \$0?

The [Platform Support Form](#) is used by TELUS Fund to confirm eligibility of the platform and is not a binding agreement. At the development stage, the Platform Support Form also meets TELUS Fund's minimum requirement for at least a letter of interest from the Platform in the development of the project.

There are no minimum license fee threshold requirements for Platforms. However, if you obtain financing from a Platform, it will certainly increase the competitiveness of your submission.

I'm stuck on platform support for a feature film. Most distributors want to see a finished product BEFORE offering distribution. Do you have any examples of feature films successfully funded by TELUS Fund, and what they were able to obtain for a platform/distributor to qualify for funding?

The definition of an eligible Platform includes being able to demonstrate a recent track record of achieving an average 20K Canadian views per episode to substantial completion (e.g., 75%) with comparable Programming. A few theatrical distributors in the French market have demonstrated a track record of achieving at least 20K tickets sold in the Canadian box office. In most cases, feature films will need to obtain support from another eligible Platform that meets TELUS Fund's definition.

For the platform license for YouTube, would I need to secure a partner that will host on YouTube or an actual letter from YouTube themselves?

Potential eligible Platforms may include channels that are hosted on YouTube that achieve an average of 20K Canadian views per episode to substantial completion (e.g., 75%) with comparable programming.

What are platforms you've seen back projects you financed OTHER than CBC Gem?

Check out the [Project Showcase](#) for a listing of all funded projects and all the platforms on which they can be watched.

Can an educational distributor who has a streaming service as well be eligible to be our platform?

Intermediary distributors and sales agents undertaking to sell the Programming on your behalf to other entities that will then make the Programming accessible by Canadians do not meet TELUS Fund's definition of an eligible Platform.

I saw English-speaking productions in the Caregivers section on TELUS Fund's site. Is the YouTube channel an automatic platform for funded projects?

Only *CRTC-Recognized Services* (e.g. Canadian broadcasters) automatically meet TELUS Fund's definition of an eligible Platform. The eligibility of all other platforms, including the [Stories for Caregivers website](#), [Facebook page](#), or [YouTube channel](#), would be considered on a project-by-project basis using information provided in the Platform Support Form.

Can we have a broadcaster and submit to Stories for Caregivers or does this conflict with the platform?

Successful applicants to the 2024 Stories for Caregivers Program grant to the Stories for Caregivers platform an exclusive license for a period of 6 months and non-exclusive thereafter. Your broadcaster would need to acknowledge this license within the terms of their license agreement.

5. Audience Partner

Can an audience partner be the same as a platform, if the platform is a high traffic social media?

Expert Organizations and Platforms have their own support forms. There is no need for them to also complete the [Audience Partner Support Form](#).

Can an Audience Partner also be a Key "Talent" or Co-Producer of the project?

Audience Partners have an online reach in Canada of at least 20K subscribers, followers, or fans. If your key “talent” or co-producer has this level of online reach in Canada, then they would be considered an Audience Partner.

6. Budget and Financing

If successful, would I receive funding in advance if my organization currently does not have required financial resources?

TELUS Fund will enter into a financing agreement and advance funding **after** the successful applicant has secured 100% of financial sources (other than TELUS Fund) required to complete the proposed deliverables for the stage of financing.

What is the drawdown for production financing?

TELUS Fund financing is typically allocated over 3 to 5 payments, depending on the complexities of the project and the amount of financing from the Fund. In the case of 3 payments, they are typically: 60% upon signing the financing agreement, 30% upon completion of fine cuts of the Programming, and 10% upon receipt of final deliverables.

Can private investment/corporate sponsors be part of the financial plan?

Yes.

Please explain the impact of TELUS Fund financing on tax credits.

As provincial and federal tax credit policies are complex, applicants are encouraged to consult with them directly on this question. To date, many of these programs have determined financing from the Fund to be akin to a grant or subsidy reducing the eligible tax credit.

Has there been an instance where production funding has been offered, but lower than what was requested?

Yes. TELUS Fund’s program budget is rarely sufficient to provide financing to all worthy projects at the level requested.

What is the average budget (between how much and how much) of projects accepted into the TELUS Fund in development and production?

The following information concerning the **average** level of financing and budget size is provided within the 2024 Program Guidelines:

- Typically, 10 submissions per year are selected to receive development financing. In the last five fiscal years, the average per project financing was \$27K or 66% of the development budget with 4 exceptional applications receiving more than \$50,000.
- Typically, 10 submissions per year are selected to receive production financing. In the last five fiscal years, the average per project financing was \$230K or 31% of the production budget. Nineteen projects received more than \$250K and 3 exceptional applications received more than \$400K. Eight projects received financing greater than 49% of the production budget.

Minimum and maximum budget levels by stage of financing are not currently available.

7. Stage of Financing

If by September, I've already started production, can I still apply for Production Financing or would that be Post-Launch? We've shot it and just need money for post. Will we still qualify for production financing? What if we are 70% through our production and need funding for the remainder & post?

It is too late to apply for production financing if you have already **delivered the completed project** to the Platform. Any time before that, you are welcome to apply for Production Financing. Consider applying for post-launch financing after the project has launched and achieved measured success.

Can we request development financing if we have a Go in production at the beginning of April?

It is too late to apply for development financing if the project is already ready to proceed into production. Development financing is available to projects that will have sufficient time before the planned start of production to enter into a development financing agreement with TELUS Fund and complete the development stage after the Board renders funding decisions in early June. If the project is ready to proceed into production, consider applying for production financing.

Is it possible to have financing in post-launch if not having financing from the Fund in production?

Applicants that have already received production financing for their project from the Fund are immediately eligible to apply for post-launch financing. Other applicants **that did not receive production financing** are also welcome to apply if they are able to provide evidence of achieving an average of 20K views to substantial completion (e.g., 75%) per episode for their well-being content.

8. Check Alignment

If all applicants meet the 4 criteria, and their requests are all within TELUS Fund's earmarked budget for Development, is it possible for TELUS Fund to approve them all?

Applications for financing are compared to others at the same stage of financing according to the four Evaluation Criteria in the 2024 Program Guidelines. TELUS Fund's program budget is rarely sufficient to provide financing to all worthy projects at the level requested.

Do we have more luck if the submitted project has funding confirmed in the financial structure from other institutions, whether in development or production?

All applications for financing are compared to others at the same stage of financing according to 4 evaluation criteria. The second criterion, Project Plan, includes consideration of the readiness of the project to proceed into development or production. The most competitive submissions will have already secured other sources of project financing and be ready to proceed with financing from the Fund.

Is a mini-series (5 episodes and less) as competitive as a series (6 episodes and more)? Or is a series favoured? Low alignment in the quadrant graph = single episode. Does this mean that a single documentary is less likely?

One-off films of any length and mini-series can have great difficulty in reaching an audience in comparison to TV series and web series which can develop the audience over multiple episodes of programming. Projects with fewer episodes of Programming are typically only successful at TELUS Fund if they have strong support from an eligible Platform and resources sufficient to create ample Complementary Content to develop the audience over an extended period.

Does the Comprehensive Audience Development Plan require a minimum amount of \$50,000 to be competitive?

Typically, TELUS Fund requires a minimum of 10% of the total budget or \$50,000 (whichever is more) to be allocated toward executing the [Comprehensive Audience Development Plan](#). Exceptions are considered in those cases where the eligible Platform has demonstrated exceptional support for the project in terms of their license fee, the placement the project will receive on their platform, and their commitment to supporting execution of the Comprehensive Audience Development Plan.

How many applications do you expect to receive for Development?

At the last September 2023 deadline, TELUS Fund received 23 applications requesting development financing over \$1M. Approximately \$170k was allocated to the most competitive 6 applications.

9. General

Are there any plans to update the TELUS Fund application forms to remove the barrier of access to people who don't have Microsoft Word and have an option that uses Google Doc?

TELUS Fund is working toward automating the application form for the September 2024 deadline. For the April 2024 deadline, the manual application form using Microsoft Word is required. Microsoft offers a free trial for a short period of time which can be used to complete TELUS Fund's application form.

Do you provide funding for disabled creators to have assistance with preparing paperwork?

TELUS Fund does not have funding available to assist with preparing paperwork.

Is the September deadline for the development fund?

In 2024, applications for **all stages of financing** will be received during the four-week period before these two deadline dates: April 5, 2024, at 17:00 PT and September 20, 2024, at 17:00 PT.

Will you accept an application for a project that was rejected in the last round?

An applicant that has previously been declined may re-apply one more time for the same stage of funding provided the Applicant and Project remain eligible and there are material increases in the level of support for the project from Key Partners and other financial sources. If a project has been declined twice, it will no longer be considered eligible to re-apply for the same stage of financing.