

## MANITOBA INDIGENOUS SHORT FILM FUND 2026-2027

### Program Guidelines

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The following documents are an integral part of the guidelines for Manitoba Film & Music's (MFM) **Manitoba Indigenous Short Film Fund**:

- 1) Program Guidelines, including Application Checklist (this document)
- 2) Calculation Criteria for Manitoba Expenditures ([Schedule A](#))
- 3) Marketing & Distribution Plan ([Schedule B](#))
- 4) Insurance Requirements ([Schedule C](#))

**Please note:**

- All documents are available on the [Manitoba Film & Music website](#).
  - MFM's application is to be accessed and submitted on [MFM's SmartSimple portal](#).
  - Applicants may consult this "[Registration](#)" guide to gain access to the portal.
  - Applicants must pre-register in the portal prior to applying. The registration process can take up to five business days to complete. Please make sure you start the process well in advance of any relevant deadlines or eligibility dates for your project.
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**These Program Guidelines contain the following sections:**

- A. [About The Program](#)
  - B. [Eligibility Requirements](#)
  - C. [Application Checklist](#)
  - D. [Assessment](#)
  - E. [Timeline](#)
  - F. [Financial Contribution](#)
  - G. [Important Information](#)
  - H. [Terms & Conditions](#)
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After reading the Guidelines, if you have any questions about this Fund, please do not hesitate to contact us. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have:

- [filmapplications@mbfilmmusic.ca](mailto:filmapplications@mbfilmmusic.ca)
- 204-272-6136

## A. ABOUT THE PROGRAM

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The **Manitoba Indigenous Short Film Fund** is a competitive initiative designed to increase Indigenous-made projects by supporting the production of a short film. This Fund aims to amplify the unique voices of Indigenous storytellers and creative prairie-based talent, contributing to the professional development of emerging and mid-career writers, directors, and producers.

Each selected team will receive up to **\$20,000** in production financing provided by Manitoba Film & Music (MFM) and the Indigenous Screen Office (ISO) to complete a short film. A maximum of three projects / teams will be selected.

## A. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

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### 1. Filmmaking Teams:

- Applicants must consist of a writer, director, and producer.
- At least two members of the creative team (writer, director, and producer) must be Indigenous.
- All team members must be Canadian citizens or permanent residents, with at least one team member residing in Manitoba. Projects with a higher proportion of Manitoba-resident team members may be ranked more favourably during the [assessment](#) process.
- One person can fulfill more than one role, but single persons fulfilling all roles of writer/producer/director must have at least another dedicated producer on board to apply.

### 2. Projects:

- Must be scripted, documentary, or experimental short films (live action or animation).
- Films must be between 3 and 15 minutes in length.
- Principal photography must occur in Manitoba, with the exception of documentaries.
- Projects must be original and producers must have proof of ownership in the property and all rights to produce and exploit the production.

### 3. Experience:

- The writer, producer, and director each must not have had a previous credit on a feature in their role. For example, a filmmaker who has produced a feature film before, is only eligible to apply as writer or director. Alternatively, a filmmaker who has directed a feature film before can only apply as writer or producer to this program.
- Executive Producers with feature film experience can be attached in a mentorship capacity.

#### 4. Company:

- The production company must be [registered as a business or incorporated in Manitoba](#). Registration or incorporation is not required at the time of application, however, successful applicants must complete registration or incorporation prior to entering into a funding agreement.

## B. APPLICATION CHECKLIST

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Applicants must submit:

1. A script (maximum 15 pages), or treatment/project overview in the case of documentaries.
2. Creative package (maximum 10 pages) which includes the following:
  - a) A short synopsis
  - b) Detailed story outline and project description
  - c) Character or subject descriptions
  - d) Visual look and feel
  - e) Where the film will it be shot (city, town, on location, using sets, in a studio)
  - f) Director's vision statement
3. Creative team profile including bios for writer, director, and producer and any relevant links to project demos and/or previous work. Describe any history of collaboration between the team.
4. CVs or résumés for writer, director, and producer (maximum two pages each).
5. A production budget (top sheet only) and financing plan, including any additional sources of funding if the budget exceeds \$20,000. Please use Telefilm Canada's [micro-budget template](#).
6. Proof of Indigenous identity for at least two team members. (See page 8 of the [ISO's General Guidelines for more information](#).)
7. A production timeline outlining project milestones (including Prep, Production, Post-production, and Delivery of the final film).
8. Short [Marketing & Distribution Plan](#) outlining how the project will reach audiences.

All applications including supporting documents must be submitted through MFM's online [application portal](#). Additional information will be requested in the online application form.

## C. ASSESSMENT

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An assessment committee comprising representatives from MFM, the ISO, and Indigenous industry professionals will review applications based on the following:

**Applicant Experience and Track Record** – The experience and potential of the applicant, recognizing that applicants may be early in their careers. Consideration is given to demonstrated commitment, transferable experience, completion of previous projects, and the presence of mentorship where appropriate.

**Creative Team Capacity** – The experience and capacity of the key creative personnel and involvement of Manitoba-based creatives.

**Diversity and Inclusion** – The extent to which the project supports diversity and equity within its creative team and content.

**Creative Merit** – The strength, originality, and clarity of the project’s creative vision, including the quality of the script or concept.

**Manitoba Impact** – The anticipated benefit to the local industry, including utilizing the highest degree of Manitoba cast & crew and use of Manitoba locations, facilities, & services.

**Market Awareness** – The applicant’s understanding of the intended audience and the potential for the project to enhance the profile and future opportunities of Manitoba creators and companies.

**Project Feasibility** – The overall viability of the production plan, including the proposed budget, financing structure, and schedule.

**Please note:**

- Eligibility under these guidelines does not guarantee financial support. The funding decisions of MFM are final. Creative feedback or written reports for projects that have not received funding will not be provided.
- The project must follow the laws, regulations, standards, and policies applicable to broadcasting and to intellectual property, and the project must not infringe upon any public or private rights and must not otherwise contravene the Canadian civil and criminal laws in effect.
- Successful applicants must demonstrate to the satisfaction of MFM that all necessary [insurance](#) is in place prior to principal photography.
- Projects must not have commenced principal photography prior to the official selection date.
- MFM retains the sole discretion to determine whether a project meets genre and format eligibility.

## D. TIMELINE

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- **Applications open:** Monday, June 8, 2026
- **Applicant Profiles created in the portal no later than:** Monday, July 13, 2026
- **Applications close:** Monday July 20, 2026 (early submissions are encouraged)
- **Notification:** Successful applicants will be notified by September 25, 2026
- **Delivery:** Completed films must be delivered by August 2027

## E. FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

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Each project selected will receive:

- Up to \$20,000 in production financing.
- Opportunity for a streaming licence on [APTN+](#), made possible through a broadcast partnership with APTN.

## F. IMPORTANT INFORMATION

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The **Manitoba Indigenous Short Film Fund** is in the form of a grant.

Please note that as a grant, the contribution from this Fund WILL grind (reduce) the [Manitoba Tax Credit](#), if your team elects to utilize Tax Credits in your financing.

Funds will be disbursed according to a pre-arranged schedule for project reporting requirements:

- 80% at contract signing
- 10% upon receipt of a rough cut and all interim reporting deliverables
- 10% upon completion and approval of all final report deliverables

If selected, a separate production bank account must be set up for the project, under the applicant production company. The signatories for the bank account must be Manitoba residents in majority.

## G. TERMS & CONDITIONS

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- Rights to the project remain with the filmmakers. Majority ownership must lie with the Indigenous applicant(s), and the Indigenous partner(s) must have at least 51% ownership.
- Films must acknowledge MFM, ISO, and APTN contributions in the credits, including logo placement. MFM's funding agreement will include specific screen credit requirements.

## **SCHEDULE A**

### **Calculation Criteria for Manitoba Expenditures**

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General: A Manitoba expenditure refers to any production expense that is paid to a Manitoba resident or company\*.

Specific considerations:

Airfare:

- Include 50% regardless of how it is booked.

Per Diem:

- Include 50% for Manitobans working outside Manitoba.
- Include 100% for Manitobans working inside Manitoba.
- Include 50% for non-Manitobans working inside Manitoba.

Hotel/Accommodations:

- Include 0% outside Manitoba.
- Include 100% inside Manitoba.

Vehicle Rentals:

- Include 0% outside Manitoba.
- Include 100% inside Manitoba.

Interim Financing/Bank Fees:

- Include 100% if it is through a Manitoba bank account, regardless of where the account manager is located.

Insurance:

- Include 100% if through a Manitoba insurance broker.

Legal:

- Include 100% if through a Manitoba lawyer.

*\* This Schedule applies only to the Manitoba Indigenous Short Film Fund and does not apply to the Manitoba Film & Video Production Tax Credit Program.*

## **SCHEDULE B**

### **Marketing & Distribution Plan**

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All applicants must submit a short Marketing & Distribution Plan outlining how the project will reach audiences in Canada, and internationally, if applicable.

Examples of what to include in the plan could include:

- Release strategy and timeline, relevant to the length and genre of your project.
- Film festival submission plan, with specific festivals named. Include any themed and/or genre festivals suitable for your project / team that you will be seeking out.
- Broadcast, streaming, and/or VOD opportunities.
- Gallery and/or artist-run centre screening opportunities.
- Plans to work with a distributor.
- Publicity and social media strategy surrounding the film.
- Information on your project's target audience and demographic.
- How this project's distribution plan relates to your overall career as a filmmaker.

## **SCHEDULE C**

### **Insurance Requirements**

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It is MFM's standard practice that the Producer shall obtain and maintain in good standing the following policies of insurance (the "Policies"):

a) **Comprehensive General Liability Insurance**

- with a limit of at least \$2,000,000 per occurrence.

b) **Equipment Insurance**

MFM reserves the right to require additional insurance based on the scale and scope of the project.

The Policies shall expressly provide that MFM is a loss payee or an additional insured (as applicable), the wording of which shall be as follows:

**Comprehensive General Liability Insurance**

"It is hereby understood and agreed that MFM, its officers, directors, agents, and employees are added as additional insureds, but only with respect to the operations of the Insured in the stated production. This policy shall not be cancelled or modified in such a manner as to reduce or limit coverage unless 30 days prior written notice has been given to MFM via registered mail."

MFM suggests applicants contact [the Winnipeg Film Group regarding their Production Insurance](#), which should be sufficient for short films applied for through this program.