

**FONDS D'APPUI
STRATÉGIQUE
AUX MÉDIAS
COMMUNAUTAIRES**

**COMMUNITY
MEDIA
STRATEGIC
SUPPORT FUND**

GRANT APPLICATION GUIDE

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Community Media Strategic Support Fund (the "Fund") is an initiative funded by the Action Plan for Official Languages – 2018–2023: Investing in Our Future. This plan included the creation of a new community media support fund (\$10 million over five years) and an investment in the next generation of media professionals (\$4.5 million over five years). The Fund will support new strategic projects¹ that will contribute to the vitality of official-language minority community media (OLMCM).

Funding from the Fund stems from the Development of Official Languages Communities Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

The orientation and parameters of the Fund were defined through consultations with OLMCM representatives in January 2019.

The Fund is being implemented by and for OLMCM. The program falls under the Consortium of Official-Language Minority Community Media, which is made up of representatives of the Alliance des radios communautaires du Canada (ARC), the Association de la presse francophone (APF), the Quebec Community Newspapers Association (QCNA) and the English-Language Arts Network (ELAN).

The APF is responsible for administering the Fund on behalf of the Consortium. However, the evaluation process and funding decisions will be the sole responsibility of a panel of experts who will carry out their mandate independently of the Consortium and eligible media outlets.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE FUND

The Fund exists to help OLMCM identify and implement the measures needed to strategically strengthen their capacity to serve official-language minority populations in Canada. Thanks to the Fund, these media will be able to define accurately, and respond to, the difficulties they are facing.

The Fund supports projects that must generate benefits² for each of the three following :

- The media outlet that receives a grant from the Fund
- The OLMCM sector
- Official language minority communities

3. MEDIA OUTLETS ELIGIBLE FOR SUPPORT FROM THE FUND

Below are listed the media outlets that may apply for support from the Fund and the media outlets that are not eligible to receive such support:

¹ Project designed to lead to major change by sustainably and measurably improving a situation deemed unsatisfactory.

² For example, a media outlet must have a plan or strategies to correct a given situation or better serve the community, etc.

A. Eligible media outlets

- Registered non-profit organization operating a print or digital official-language minority newspaper in Canada
- A business or media groups managing at least one print or digital official-language minority newspaper in Canada
- Non-profit organizations holding a license awarded by the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) for an official-language minority community radio station in Canada.

B. Eligible official-language minority community newspapers

To be eligible, an official-language minority community newspaper must demonstrate that it meets all the following criteria:

- Ensure news coverage of a given official-language minority population in its language
- Offer at least 50% original editorial content in English in Quebec OR 50% original editorial content in French in another of Canada's nine (9) provinces or one of its three (3) territories
- Contain a minimum of 50% local editorial content that reflects the reality of a given population with 30% written by professional journalists or correspondents³.
- Be published on a regular schedule in paper or digital format
- Be published at least ten (10) times per year
- Contain an average of 12 pages and have a distinct graphic charter
- Be published by a duly identified publisher.

C. Eligible official-language minority community radio stations

To be eligible, an official-language minority community radio station must demonstrate that it meets all the following criteria:

- Serve an official-language minority population in its language
- Produce programming that reflects the diversity of the populations served
- Broadcast local and regional information and news
- Participate in promoting local and regional cultural and artistic expression
- Hold a valid community-type broadcasting license awarded by the CRTC to:
 - Deliver English or bilingual programming in Quebec OR
 - Deliver programming in French in one of Canada's other nine provinces or one of its three territories
- Comply with all provisions of the CRTC community radio policy.

³ These professionals are remunerated for their work and adhere to generally recognized ethical journalism principles (e.g., fact-checking, working free of bias or external influence, identifying sources, showing editorial judgment).

D. Non-eligible media outlets

The following media outlets are not eligible to receive support from the Fund:

- Radio stations holding a private-type broadcasting licence awarded by the CRTC in a minority setting
- Specialized private radio stations
- Community television stations
- Media funded by government bodies (e.g. CBC, etc.)
- Web or digital media not meeting all the criteria set out in points 3B and 3C of this guide
- Newspapers or radio stations of postsecondary educational institutions offering programs of study related to media
- Specialized magazines and publications
- Start-up projects for new newspapers or community radio stations.

Any community media outlet wishing to apply to the Fund may inquire beforehand with the program manager about their eligibility.

4. TYPES OF ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

The Fund supports projects meeting the strategic needs of OLMCM in Canada. These projects must fall into one of the following categories:

- Strategic development:** Conducting a needs analysis; conducting a strategic planning exercise; developing a specific strategy⁴ as it related to increasing advertising revenue, marketing, or employee recruitment and retention, etc.
- Managing transitions:** Exploring or implementing changes to a media outlet (e.g., merging with another organization, changing legal status, introducing a board of directors, studying or implementing a transition in service delivery [e.g., shift to digital])
- Creating collaboration initiatives for OLMCM in Canada:** Sharing resources (e.g., human resources, office space, software), pooling suppliers, instituting joint supply methods, creating joint content access platforms
- Improving capacity:** Delivering training (e.g., practical experience, professional development), building partnerships (e.g., with schools, universities, and colleges), acquiring additional expertise (e.g., hiring staff to meet specific needs)
- Increasing financial sustainability:** Creating and implementing pilot projects specific to new business models, developing new revenue streams, diversifying revenue sources, and broadening proven revenue models.

The Fund does not support the regular activities or the operations of eligible media outlets but may support a project forming part of a multi-year strategy.

⁴ A strategy is a plan designed to achieve a major objective.

5. MAXIMUM GRANT AMOUNTS

A. Projects conducted independently or in partnership with an entity not eligible for support from the Fund

The Fund may provide a grant of up to \$75,000 per year for a project conducted independently by an eligible media outlet or conducted in partnership with a non-eligible community, institution, or private entity.

B. Projects conducted in partnership with one or more other media outlets eligible for support from the Fund

The Fund may provide a grant of up to \$150,000 per year for a project conducted by an eligible media outlet in partnership with one or more other eligible media outlets.

6. GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS

- Only grant applications submitted through the online portal at EASMC-CMSSE.ca will be considered.
- Only grant applications submitted by eligible media outlets will be considered.
- Any application from an ineligible third party will be rejected.
- Any incomplete application will be rejected.
- Media outlets managing more than one media have the following two options:
 - submit one project per year for all their medias,
 - Submit one project per year for a media in particular.

7. IMPORTANT DATES

A. Grant application period

The grant application period for the first year of the Fund is from **November 20, 2019, to January 17, 2020.**

No applications will be accepted after 11:59 p.m., Pacific Time, January 17, 2020.

B. Project length

Approved projects:

- may span 6 to 12 months in length,
- can start as early as March 1st, and
- must be completed by March 31, 2021, at the latest.

It is strongly recommended that a representative of the applicant media outlet attend one of the Fund's information session that will be offered during the week of November 25, 2019.

8. APPLICATION EVALUATION PROCESS

Following a public call for applications, a panel responsible for evaluating applications and recommending the allocation of funds will be formed of four (4) independent bilingual consultants (two members from Quebec's Anglophone minority population and two members from the Francophone Canadian minority). These members will possess expertise in media, business management, or operations and will be aware and understand the realities, challenges and needs of official-language minority populations.

The panel members will be responsible for analyzing all eligible applications in accordance with the established evaluation criteria in point 9 of this guide.

The panel's decisions will be final and without appeal.

(The names of the members of the independent panel will only be released after the grant recipients have been publicly announced.)

9. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The jury members will rely on the following elements to evaluate the projects submitted to the Fund:

- **30% of the mark** - Impact of the project on the sustainability, profitability, and future of the media outlet in question (e.g., generation of new income, reduction of expenses).
- **20% of the mark** - Submitted project's relevance, its clarity, its objectives and its compatibility with any of the five types of projects listed in section 4.
- **20% of the mark** - Impact of the project on the communities served by the eligible media outlet (e.g., increase or maintenance of active offer of service).
- **20% of the mark** - Ability of the media outlet to complete the project (e.g., financial situation, access to required resources).
- **10% of the mark** - Quality and sustainability of the proposed strategic partnerships (e.g., partners' commitment to the success of the project):

Only projects that obtain a mark of **at least 75%** will be eligible for funding.

Grants will be awarded based on merit until the Fund's budget is exhausted.

10. ELIGIBLE AND NON-ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Media outlets must take into account the following eligible and non-eligible expenses when preparing their project budgets:

A. Eligible expenses

- Salaries of staff assigned to carry out the proposed project.
- Professional fees to hire consultants assigned to the project.

- Administrative expenses (e.g., accounting, general office expenses, additional rent, rental of rooms or additional equipment, etc.).
 - Maximum of 10% of the total budget.
- Travel expenses (including accommodation and per diems) related to carrying out the project
 - Maximum of 5% of the total budget.
- Promotional expenses for public and targeted project visibility
 - Maximum of 10% of the total budget.
- Other expenses related to carrying out the project (e.g., printing, graphic arts, distribution, etc.).

B. Non-eligible expenses:

- All operating expenses of the media outlet not directly related to carrying out the project (e.g., regular rent, salaries of staff not assigned to the project, media outlet regular production expenses unrelated to the project, etc.)
- Deficit reduction.

If in doubt, media outlets may contact the program manager of the Fund before preparing their budget.

11. ABOUT THE FUNDING

For grants issued before March 31, 2020, the Fund will cover 100% of all eligible expenses for accepted projects.

Matching funding will not be required.

12. DOCUMENTS TO BE SUBMITTED

In addition to completing the grant proposal forms found on the portal, media outlets must upload the following documents:

- Any governing documents of the media outlet.
- Bylaws of the media outlet (if applicable).
- Last audited financial statements, the annual review engagement or financial results submitted to the Canada Revenue Agency
- Deficit recovery plan (if applicable).
- Operating budget for the current fiscal year.
- Resumé of the person responsible for carrying out project
- Declaration by the owner of a private media outlet or a motion adopted by the board of directors of a non-profit organization confirming that the person submitting the grant application is duly authorized to act on behalf of the outlet or organization
- Partners' letters of intent or a memorandum of understanding signed by all the stakeholders involved in carrying out the project (if applicable).

- For community radio only: Copy of documents confirming the nature and validity of their license with the CRTC.
- For community newspapers: Three (3) copies of their newspaper for the publication period indicated in the online program.

These documents are integral parts of the application evaluation process.

13. AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CONSORTIUM AND A GRANT RECIPIENT

Once a media outlet has been informed of the approval of its application, it must sign an agreement with the APF acting on behalf of the Consortium.

This agreement will set out the grant recipient's obligations and lead to an immediate payment of 95% of the allocated amount.

14. GRANT FINAL REPORT

Funding recipients must submit a complete report as well as all required supporting documents within 30 days of project completion.

This report will include:

- a comprehensive financial report specifying how the grant was spent.
 - The Fund reserves the right to require supporting documentation
- a demonstration of the results achieved by the project, in accordance with the information found in the project application, and of any unexpected results
- a measurement of the project's impact on the grant recipient's sustainability, profitability, and future
- a measurement of the project's impact on the quality and sustainability of the strategic partnerships formed or, the impact of the project on the OLMCM sector
- an update of the impact data form to allow measurement of the project's impact on the official-language minority communities served by the grant recipient.

Once the grant final report has been evaluated and deemed satisfactory, the remaining 5% of the grant initially withheld will be released to the recipient.

15. ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF FUND SUPPORT

The recipients of a grant must publicly acknowledge its source.

The Consortium will supply a sentence with relevant logos in French, in English and a bilingual version for publication or broadcast:

- On the newspaper's masthead
- On any public printed document discussing the project or when it is mentioned in social media
- On the media outlet's website
- On the air, when the recipient speaks about their project.

Examples of use of this acknowledgment must be attached to the grant final report.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Glossary

Recipient: Organization, society or person who receives a grant from the Fund.

Applicant: Organization, society or person who applies for a grant from the Fund.

Fund: Community Media Strategic Support Fund.

Media outlet: Organization whose primary goal is to disseminate information to the general public via a written or audio means of communication.

Masthead (of a newspaper): Text box or space, generally located at the beginning or end of a newspaper, containing the names and contact information of the publisher and printer as well as the names of the contributors and partners.

Matching funding: An additional cash or service contribution from the applicant and / or partners to deliver an initiative.

Qualitative measure: Description aimed at understanding or explaining behavior, motivations and characteristics, based on the collection of verbal rather than measurable data leading to an interpretive and subjective analysis.

Quantitative measure: Description based on an investigation conducted by survey or questionnaire leading to quantifiable results, i.e., measurable and countable data, with the objective of describing and collecting pre-existing data.