



Fonds canadien de la
radio communautaire

Community Radio
Fund of Canada

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

2024-2025

**PROGRAM
GUIDELINES**

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY RADIO FUND OF CANADA

The Community Radio Fund of Canada (CRFC) seeks and secures resources to fuel the production, distribution, and sustainability of Canada's community audio broadcasters through dynamic funding programs.

The CRFC advocates for and supports the contribution of community audio broadcasters to the media sector in Canada, reflecting the diversity of their listeners, promoting independent, local content, and building their capacity to connect and inform their communities.

THE LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

The Local Journalism Initiative (LJI) is funded by the Government of Canada and supports the creation of **original local journalism** that covers the diverse needs of **underserved communities** across Canada (i.e. regions and communities with little or no access to local news and public interest information). It is an opportunity for stations who would otherwise not have the means to hire a journalist to be able to create news content that is relevant to the communities that the station serves.

Funding is available to eligible Canadian media organizations to hire journalists to produce local news, civic information, and reporting on matters in the public interest while upholding best practices in journalistic excellence. Journalists funded under this program cover municipal institutions of their communities, such as city halls, band councils, and school boards, while also reporting on issues of local or regional importance. The program promotes employment and coverage that reflects Canadian diversity.

To preserve the independence of the press, the Community Radio Fund of Canada is one of the not-for-profit organizations administering the Initiative on behalf of the Government of Canada.

The content produced will be made available to media organizations through a **Creative Commons** license so that Canadians can be better informed. In addition to a station's airwaves and website, this journalistic content will be made available to all Canadians via Frequency (Fréquence for Francophone news), the new online web portal and national distribution platform replacing Canada-Info.ca.

Purpose of funding

The program supports the hiring and employment of a professional journalist to create regular journalistic content for an **underserved community** in order to cover the activities of the community's civic institutions (for example, courthouses, city halls, band councils, school boards, federal Parliament, or provincial legislatures) or other subjects of public importance to society.

This program will not fund the salary of an existing journalist at your station. However, requests can be made to increase the number of hours worked by an existing journalist.

Applicants will confirm that the employment made through the initiative would not have otherwise been created without financial support from the program.

This program will not fund content that does not pertain to current events or local issues; illegal content (e.g., hate propaganda); opinions; advertising; content that is demonstrably false or misleading content, nor investigative content to inform a lobbying and/or advocacy strategy with levels of government. The Local Journalism Initiative seeks to fund news content that follows journalistic best practices, principles, and standards that do not push an ideological point of view. The CRFC reserves the right to withdraw funding to stations found to violate these terms and conditions.

FRÉQUENCE (frequenceinfo.ca) AND FREQUENCY (frequencynews.ca) - NATIONAL DISTRIBUTION PLATFORM

The stories that matter to your community also matter to other Canadians. We commit to not only supporting the journalism created by this initiative but to sharing it with the rest of the country.

The reporting produced by journalists hired through the LJI program is made available to Canadian media outlets and the public at no charge via the **national distribution platform** Frequency and Fréquence for Francophone news, which has replaced Canada-Info as the online web portal for LJI news content. Canadian media outlets will be able to rebroadcast and share the content created by the LJI journalists via a Creative Commons license.

NATIONAL EDITORS

The **National Editors** work to support successful applicants with hiring, training, and supervision of the journalists hired through this initiative as needed to preserve journalistic integrity and rigor as outlined in the Journalistic Standards and Practices used in this program. They are the editors of Frequency and Fréquence and provide feedback, guidance, and resources to the LJI journalists through training, weekly editorial meetings, and one-on-one sessions. While the National Editors are there to provide guidance and support, ultimately the journalist is still the employee of the recipient station.

The journalists work alongside and communicate regularly with the National Editors to ensure all of the journalistic content they create is vetted and published via the national distribution platform, [Frequency](http://frequencynews.ca). LJI journalists must produce a minimum of four original news stories for Frequency per week.

The National Editors help to ensure that content created by the journalists respects the [Journalistic Principles](#) of Frequency / Fréquence by applying the [Journalistic Standards and Principles](#) developed by the CBC.

TIMELINE

2024-2025

April 19
Applications open

April 20 - May 15
Feedback offered to stations on their proposals and draft application forms.
Information sessions are held

May 15
Applications close

June 21
Final Recipients announced

As of June 24
Recipient Information sessions begin
Contribution agreement developed and signed
Hiring processes launch following signing of contribution agreement

March 31, 2025
Funding period ends

**Timeline subject to change*

ELIGIBILITY

Who can apply?

Eligible applicants are **not-for-profit** Canadian radio stations that hold one of the following CRTC broadcasting licenses:

- **Campus radio** (as set out in Public Notice CRTC 2010-499);
- **Community radio** (as set out in Public Notice CRTC 2010-499);
- **Indigenous Type B radio** (as set out in Public Notice CRTC 1990-89).

Private broadcasters and CBC/Radio-Canada are not eligible.

A station **does not** have to be a CRFC member to apply for funding.

Any recipient in violation of the terms of a previous agreement with the CRFC will not be eligible for any new funding until they have fulfilled these obligations.

Stations are encouraged to form partnerships to share journalists for a shared region of the country. One station would apply on behalf of the station(s) and will be the lead contact with the CRFC and assume legal and financial responsibility for the project.

Stations that are currently funded must re-apply to be able to continue to receive funding for the following round.

What is an underserved community and how do you identify one?

Communities are considered underserved if they are:

News deserts: Communities where citizens do not have access to journalistic information about community issues and institutions because there are no daily or community newspapers and do not have access to journalistic information about community issues and institutions through community radio or television, or other public or private broadcasters; or

Does not have access to journalistic content about community issues and institutions through a daily newspaper or public or private broadcaster, and whose only source of local news – being a newspaper or community radio or television station – demonstrates significant gaps in coverage of community issues and institutions due to a lack of capacity.

Your application must clearly outline the community you serve and how your station is best equipped to employ a journalist funded under the Local Journalism Initiative. You must outline the specific issues that a local news reporter would cover in your area and how their work would fill in gaps in the current news programming if there are already media present.

What amount is available?

Up to \$55,000 per project (including projects proposed by two or more stations working in the same region).

Which expenses are eligible?

The funding for this program can only cover two expense categories:

- 1) Journalist salary** (*including all Mandatory Employer Related Costs (MERCs); travel, housing, and technology stipends, professional development and training*)
- 2) Equipment** (*up to \$2,500 or 5 percent of the funding. Equipment refers to hardware and software that would be essential for the production of journalistic activities ie. microphones, audio recorders, digital audio workstation subscriptions, and transcription software.*)

All other expenses related to the execution of the project will be assumed by the recipient.

What is the eligible funding period?

September 3, 2024 to March 31, 2025.

SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

CONTACT US

Before submitting your application, we encourage you to contact the CRFC early to discuss your funding application. The CRFC can give you more eligibility information, review your draft application with you, and provide advice during the call for funding applications.

Please note that having the CRFC review your application beforehand does not guarantee funding. The sooner you can provide a draft to a CRFC Program Officer, the sooner they can offer you feedback.

Contact:

Francella Fiallos

Program Officer

Community Radio Fund of Canada

francella@crfc-fcrc.ca / 613-321-3513

Deadline

The CRFC will accept funding applications until **May 15 2024 at 11:59 PM EST** via its application portal [SMAApply](#).

Late applications will be ineligible for funding.

When you have submitted your application, you will receive a confirmation email. If you have not received a confirmation email, your application has not been submitted.

All submitted funding applications will be subject to a thorough review by the CRFC and an independent selection committee composed of a panel of experts. The CRFC may ask for clarification on your application.

You will have one week to provide further information on your application.

Number of applications

Each station may submit one application per call for funding. This includes applications done in partnership with another station.

Tips:

- Read the program guidelines carefully.
- Start preparing your application as soon as possible.
- Create your user account or update your eligibility profile in your account before preparing your application: <https://mycrfc-monfcrc.smapply.io/>.
- Invite collaborators to contribute to, edit and/or review your application on the platform.
- Contact the [Program Officer](#) to discuss your draft application
- Collect and update all mandatory supporting documents outlined below. Make sure to have an electronic copy of the required documents.

To submit your application, visit the CRFC's website and click on the red "Portal" button on the top left corner of the main page or head directly to the portal via this link:

<https://mycrfc-monfcrc.smapply.io/>.

Mandatory documents

When completing your application form, you will be asked to provide the following documents:

- A copy of your letters patent, provincial or federal charter, or any incorporation document;
- A copy of your most recent valid CRTC license (NOT the Industry Canada certificate);
- Financial statements of the last fiscal year;
- Operating budget of your station for the current fiscal year

If possible:

- A copy of your Human Resource Policy and/or other document(s) that demonstrates your commitment to employment equity
- A copy of your Harassment Policy or other document(s) that indicates your commitment to providing a workplace that is free from harassment

Applicants may submit materials in either English or French.

If you do not currently have a Human Resource Policy or Harassment Policy in place the CRFC will provide templates. These policies must be in place if a station is to be funded through the program. Please contact a CRFC Program Officer to access these templates.

ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL

Selection criteria

Applications are judged by an independent panel of experts using a weighted scoring system based on the following criteria:

- The description of the underserved community and the demonstrated need for journalistic coverage
- The applicant's proposed journalistic coverage
- The applicant's ability to implement the project
- The project's ability to further program objectives includes but is not limited to the regional distribution, the representation of Indigenous, ethnocultural, LGBTQ+, and official language minority communities.

Applicants seeking renewal of funding will also be evaluated on their past performance as part of the program.

This is a competitive process and applying does not guarantee funding for your project.

Approval of applications

The results of the application will be sent to applicants by email.

The CRFC expects to publicly announce the list of recipients in mid-June 2024.

Successful applicants will be invited to an information session to learn more about the program's obligations and objectives before the Contribution Agreement is signed.

Unsuccessful applicants are invited to book a meeting with the Program Officer to discuss their application and receive feedback.

Recipient Obligations

The CRFC will enter into a contribution agreement with successful applicants that outlines the terms, responsibilities, approved activities, expected results, approved expenses, as well as reporting and accountability mechanisms of both parties.

Recipients will attend an orientation session with the CRFC and the National Editors to learn more about the daily operations of the program.

Recipients will be required to follow hiring and human resource policies that promote employment equity and provide a workplace that is free from harassment. We encourage recipient stations to involve the National Editors in the hiring process of their LJI reporter(s) as they can provide specific insight into the qualities that are required from a prospective candidate. Candidates must disclose conflicts of interest that may impact coverage prior to employment. In addition, the CRFC will ensure, to the extent possible, that hired journalists

have no parental relationship with members of their organization.

If your chosen candidate is new to journalism or new to radio journalism, recipients must also provide journalists with adequate station-level training, tools, and resources for them to do their jobs effectively.

The LJI journalist must adhere to the established Journalistic Standards and Principles.

The CRFC will also enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with the journalist, the National Editors, and station management that will outline all roles and responsibilities of the major parties involved in the program (CRFC, National Editors, Station Representative, and LJI journalist). In this document, there will be an opportunity to collectively specify the content expectations for the LJI journalist, which may include details on specific formats for news programming as well as outline the frequency of news production.

During the funding period, recipients must immediately contact the CRFC in the event of any major changes to the project, as described in the contribution agreement (activities, budget, timeline, etc.). Failure to do so may result in a reduction of payments and/or impact a station's ability to receive funding in future years.

The CRFC and the National Editors will be able to offer support and provide guidance to recipients throughout the project.

To ensure that funds support incremental content creation, Final Recipients must attest that employment created through the initiative would not have otherwise been created without financial support.

The recipient stations must acknowledge the support and funding of the Government of Canada and the Community Radio Fund of Canada.

Reports

All recipients will be required to submit progress report(s) and a final report during the term, based on a format provided by the CRFC. This will include an update of activities, a summary of progress on achieving goals, an explanation of any significant challenges or delays, and a financial summary.

All recipients must submit a final report no later than 30 days following the end date indicated in the contribution agreement. The final report includes:

- A final report based on a format provided by the CRFC;
- A station budget-versus-actual report that verifies the proper accounting of related expenses;
- Proof of payments including applicable receipts.
- Any other document requested by the CRFC

Your final report is subject to the approval of the CRFC and a Program Officer may follow up to ask clarifying questions.

If your final report is late or incomplete, your final payment may be withheld.

Payment Schedule

A first payment of 75 per cent will be made when the CRFC receives written confirmation from the recipient that the implementation of the project has begun.

Upon receipt of the progress report, a payment of 15 per cent will be made when the CRFC approves the report.

The final payment of 10 percent of the total allocation will be made when the CRFC receives the final report.

The CRFC reserves the right to negotiate other payment conditions with recipients. The contribution agreement remains the official document outlining the various terms and conditions of the financial contribution.



APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY

Civic journalism :

Civic journalism refers to the collection, investigation, and dissemination of information for a public audience, undertaken by a professional journalist who follows a recognized code of ethics (e.g. from the Quebec Federation of Professional Journalists (FPJQ) or the National News Media Council (NNC)). This information may cover the activities of the country's civic institutions (e.g. courthouses, city halls, band councils, school boards, federal parliament or provincial legislatures) or subjects of public importance to society. For the purposes of the initiative, opinion columns, editorials and advertorials do not represent civic journalism.

CRFC members

All campus and community radio stations holding a broadcasting license in accordance with public notice 2010-499 as well as the associations that represent them are eligible for CRFC membership. A station that is a member of the National Campus & Community Radio Association, l'Alliance des radio communautaires du Canada or l'Associations des radiodiffuseurs du Québec is considered a CRFC member. The membership year runs from September 1 to August 31.

CRFC members may submit nominations to the Board of Directors, vote in the elections and participate in our annual general meeting. Above all, by becoming a member, you can demonstrate your support to the only organization devoted to financially supporting the campus and community radio sector in Canada. <https://crtc-fcfc.ca/en/crtc/members/>

National Editors :

National Editors assist stations in hiring and training journalists as necessary. They also work with the stations and the journalists hired through this initiative to upload their content to the national platform. They are also there to help coordinate and support all journalistic activities undertaken during this program.

National distribution platform :

The national distribution platform can be found at frequencynews.ca. This platform enables all of the news content created by LJI journalists to be shared with all Canadians. The journalist will be responsible for uploading their content to the platform including a short description of the content and all other necessary information. The National Editors will be available to assist in this task.

Underserved community

Communities are considered underserved if they are:

News deserts: Communities where citizens do not have access to journalistic information about community issues and institutions because there are no daily or community newspapers and other media (for example, community radio or television). Also, if there are other public or private broadcasters, they do not produce local news, or

Does not have access to journalistic content about community issues and institutions through a daily newspaper or public or private broadcaster, and whose only source of local news – being a newspaper or community radio or television station – demonstrates significant gaps in coverage of community issues and institutions due to a lack of capacity.

APPENDIX 2: EXAMPLES OF ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Examples of eligible expenses:

- Salary (full-time, part-time, freelance) for a journalist to produce local news and contribute to journalistic activities at your station
- Paid stipends directly to the journalist to cover expenses, such as travel, technology, and moving costs
- Equipment that helps in the production of news activities, such as microphones, audio recorders, computers, digital audio workstations, and transcription software

Examples of ineligible expenses:

- Salary to cover additional duties at your station that fall outside of journalistic activities
- Administrative and management expenses
- Regular costs incurred at the station
- Advertising and publicity
- Website hosting, domain rental, and ongoing maintenance on web projects
- Food, alcohol, and tobacco
- Prizes and gifts
- Audit fees, legal fees, or fines
- Recovering taxes, tuition, or related fees
- Interest charges on late payments