

Changing Narratives Fund

**A distinct stream of the Local Journalism Initiative delivered by the
Community Media Coalition / Community Radio Fund of Canada**



Local Journalism
Initiative



Local Journalism Initiative

Core objectives of the LJI are to:

Civic Journalism

Support the creation of original civic journalistic content for underserved communities

Diversity

Promote employment and coverage that reflects Canadian diversity

Independence

Provide support in a manner that preserves the independence of the press

The program will NOT fund the production of:

- *Content that does not pertain to current events or local issues.*
- *Opinions (including opinion columns and editorials) or advertising.*
- *Illegal content (e.g., hate propaganda) or content that is demonstrably false/misleading.*
- *Investigative content to inform a lobbying/advocacy strategy.*

Local Journalism Initiative

LJI supports the production of civic journalism for underserved communities.

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.

Areas of News Poverty

Communities where there is limited access to journalistic content about community issues and institutions through a daily newspaper or public or private broadcaster. Available sources of local news — whether a newspaper, online news service, a community radio station or other media — demonstrate significant gaps in coverage due to a lack of capacity.

About the CNF-LJI stream

The CNF supports Indigenous Peoples, Black, racialized, ethno-religious minorities, persons with disabilities, and 2SLGBTQIA+ community members.

This stream provides funding to eligible media organizations to hire journalists from these CNF Priority Communities.

Funding covers journalist salaries, equipment and professional development.

The content created must be original civic journalism.

Journalism must cover the diverse needs of underserved communities (News Deserts or Areas of News Poverty).





ELIGIBILITY


- Applicant must be an eligible Canadian press agency, non-profit, or private-sector news organization.
- Must operate in one of four sectors: Written Press, Community Radio, Community TV, or Online News Service.
- Key Criteria: Majority owned and controlled by Canadians and operations must be in Canada.
- Must adhere to a journalistic Code of Ethics (recognized association or own standard).
- Indigenous organizations are eligible if they operate an Indigenous news outlet in Canada.

**Private non-community broadcasters and CBC/Radio-Canada are ineligible for the LJI and the CNF-LJI stream.*

Strategic Priority: CNF Priority Organizations

Priority is given to organizations with a mandate to serve CNF priority communities.

A CNF Priority Organization must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- 30% or more of its board members or leadership are from CNF priority communities.
 - The organization has a mandate to primarily serve at least one CNF priority community.
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Eligible Expenses

Funding is exclusively for journalists who self-identify as members of one or more CNF priority communities.

- **Journalist Salaries:** Up to \$60,000 per full-time journalist position (annualized).
 - Includes Mandatory Employment Related Costs (MERCs), such as EI, CPP, and vacation pay.
- **Professional Development (PD):** Costs aimed at strengthening journalistic capacity within targeted communities.
 - Examples: Mentorship, training, or knowledge exchange with Elders/Knowledge Keepers.

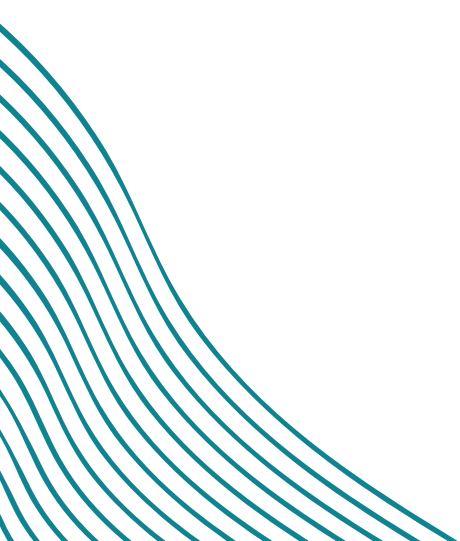
Eligible Expenses

Funding is exclusively for journalists who self-identify as members of one or more CNF priority communities.

- **Equipment:** Purchase or lease of equipment required by the CNF-LJI journalist.
 - Limited to up to 5% of total approved funding.
- **Accessibility-Related Expenses:** Covered for journalists who self-identify as Deaf, having disabilities, and/or living with mental illness.
 - This includes sign language interpretation, support workers, or specialized equipment.


Application Process

Submissions are done through the online application portal - SM Apply.

- Linked in the program guidelines and program webpages.
 - To apply via the application portal, you must create an account.
 - Fill out all of the forms and provide the mandatory support documents
 - The CRFC acknowledge receipt, by email, of any funding applications successfully submitted through the online platform.
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Application Process

You must submit the following mandatory forms and documents:

- Media Organization Profile and Application Form (including proposal for the journalist position).
 - Budget (Salary and Equipment request with rationale).
 - Mandatory Support Documents (Articles of incorporation, most recently completed financial statements).
 - Optional: Additional supporting materials like letters of support or audience reports may be submitted.
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Evaluation Process

Stage 1

Eligibility Screening:

Verification of applicant eligibility and completeness of mandatory forms.

Stage 2

Project Evaluation:

Independent Selection Committee review.

Stage 3

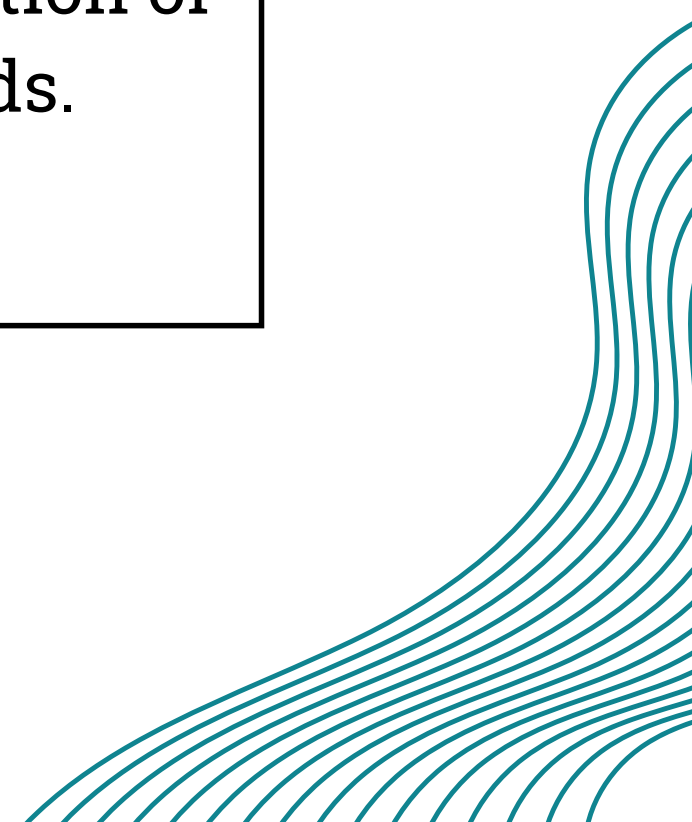
Strategic Prioritization:

A Strategic Bonus (up to 10 points) is applied for specific priorities.

Stage 4


Geographical Distribution:

Adjustments made to ensure an equitable distribution of funds.

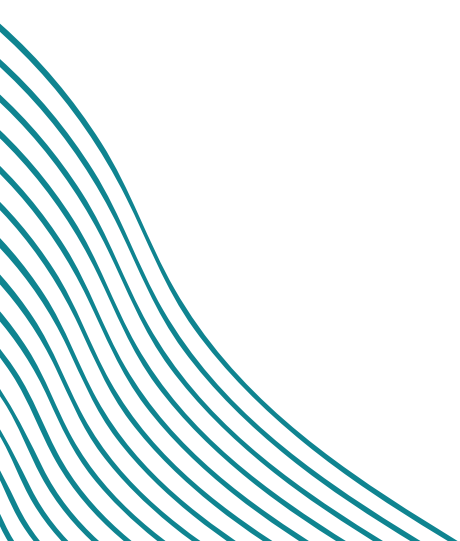


Project Evaluation Criteria

Independent Selection Committee evaluates the following:

- **RELEVANCE** (40 Pts): Does the proposal clearly identify the target Underserved Community and outline specific news gaps?
 - **IMPACT** (40 Pts): Does the proposal align strongly with LJI's core objectives and demonstrate potential for significant impact?
 - **CAPACITY** (20 Pts): Has the organization demonstrated strong support/oversight for the journalist and adherence to journalistic integrity/ethics?
 - **Strategic Bonus:** Up to 10 points added for alignment with strategic priorities (e.g., CNF Priority Organization).
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Strategic Bonus Scoring

- Indigenous Media / CNF priority organization - 10 points
 - News Desert OR Rural/Remote Area of News Poverty (serving an underrepresented group) - 7 points
 - Urban Area of News Poverty (serving an underrepresented group) - 5 points
 - Rural/Remote Area of News Poverty (General) - 3 points
 - Urban Area of News Poverty (General) - 1 point
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Funding Process

Offer of Contribution

Successful applicants receive a formal offer via email.

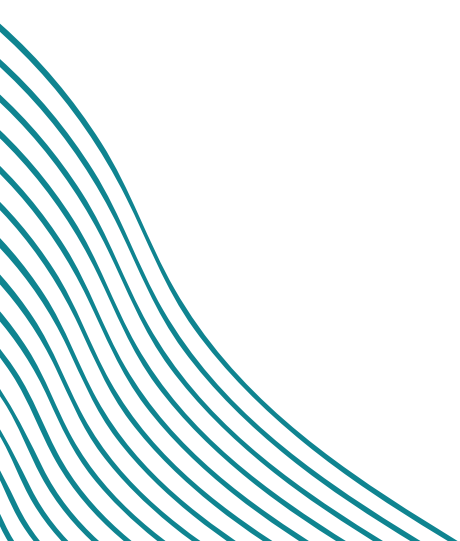
Self-Identification Form

Successful applicants must submit the Self-Identification Form (completed by the journalist)

Professional Development Plan

Successful applicants must complete the Professional Development Proposal Form

Self-Identification Form

- Responses are used to determine eligibility for support under the CNF-LJI program.
 - Journalists may select 'Prefer not to answer' for any question.
 - To be considered for CNF funding, journalists must respond to the relevant self-identification question(s).
 - Data is shared with the Department of Canadian Heritage in a completely anonymized format.
 - Information is stored according to the Administrators' Protection of Personal Information and Privacy policy.
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Professional Development Plan

Professional development plan developed with input from the journalist and tailored to the journalist's career stage while encouraging career advancement and honoring the LJI mandate and expectations.

Eligible professional development activities include a wide range of activities and can include the following (but are not limited to):

- Internships, apprenticeships, and paid placements offering hands-on experience in a newsroom and exposure to journalistic ethics and community-focused reporting;
- Mentorship programs, peer learning, and coaching initiatives;
- Training and skill-building opportunities such as workshops, certifications, or targeted learning programs (e.g., trauma-informed reporting);
- Initiatives focused on Indigenous journalism, including Indigenous language preservation, cultural protocols, and decolonized storytelling approaches;
- Knowledge Exchange with Elders/Knowledge Keepers

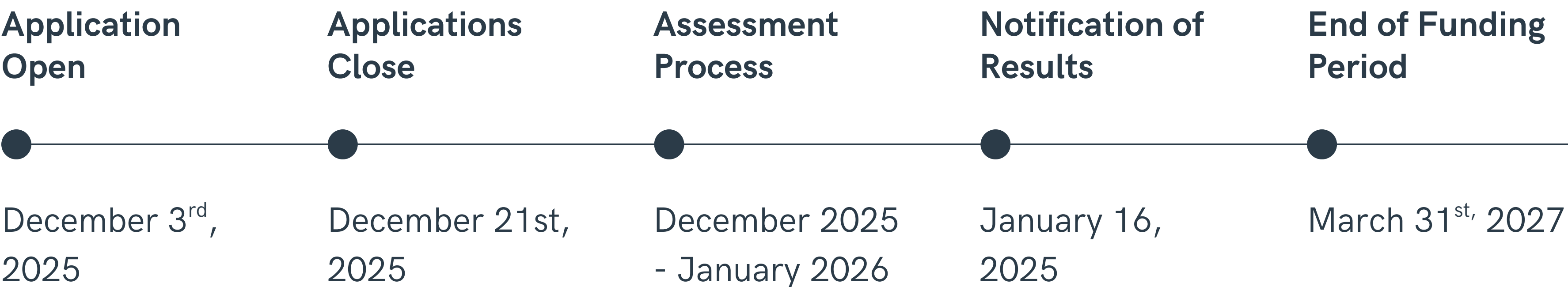
Local Journalism Initiative

CNF applicants who are unable to provide the requested documents will be able to receive funding through the LJI.

Due to the limited envelope, the CRFC may be able to support CNF proposals through the LJI Pilot Project which can provide professional development funding for Indigenous media, start-up media and media located in rural/remote communitiites.



Important Dates



Questions?

**Community Media Coalition, represented by the
Community Radio Fund of Canada**

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