Video Games Business Development

Guidelines 2026/27

CANADA MEDIA FUND

CREATIVE BC

BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Video Games Business Development Program Guidelines 2026/27

The Video Games Business Development Program is a partnership between Creative BC and Canada Media Fund (CMF) designed to open new funding opportunities to support the success and growth of B.C.-based video game companies.

Applicants must have a significant track record of video game production in the province, and proposals must be business-focused with plans for ongoing content production and capacity building. These plans must be achievable, appropriately resourced, and structured to obtain the best economic outcomes from public funding. Financial support will be non-repayable.

Maximum request per application: up to $200,000
Overall Funding Envelope Available: $1,000,000
Decision Process: Competitive, determined by an external advisory panel.
Deadline to Apply: September 28, 2026

Aims + Objectives

- Support B.C.-owned and -controlled companies developing their own creative IP.
- Encourage company growth for mid-level and experienced companies beyond project-by-project funding.

Applicant Eligibility

Applicants must meet the following requirements to apply:

- Be a for-profit company incorporated in British Columbia or Canada with its head office in British Columbia. (Note: Companies extra-provincially registered in B.C. are not eligible.)
- Be Canadian-owned as defined in the Investment Canada Act and Canadian-controlled as determined for the purposes of Sections 26 to 28 of the Investment Canada Act.
- The majority of the common interest voting shares of the company must be held by B.C. residents, defined as either a Canadian Citizen or Permanent Resident who has resided in B.C. for at least 200 of the 365 days prior to application and have filed income tax returns in B.C. for the taxation year prior to the application.
- The primary business is the creation of video games for digital game platforms, including (but not limited to) PC, mobile, consoles, and VR. The majority of output should be content owned and controlled or optioned by the applicant.
- Applicants and any related or associated parties must be in good standing with Creative BC and the CMF.

Funding Eligibility

Applicants must show they have the experience, qualifications, and resources to successfully implement their proposed plan for the funding.

Accordingly, the program is for either:

Mid-level and experienced companies, **or** **New company startups** having at least one owner with the required background, according to these criteria:

1. **Mid-level and experienced video game companies**, defined as having:
    a. published two (2) previous owned and controlled commercial titles made available for purchase or download through various retail platforms (not including prototype/demos, game jams, DLCs/expansion packs, or work for hire); **AND**
    b. $500,000 average annual business expenditures, confirmed by certified financial records;

    OR

2. **New company startups** with one or more owners who previously held ownership positions at mid-level or experienced video game companies that meet the above criteria. Ownership is defined as not merely having an equity stake, but also an executive leadership role in the company with creative, finance and business decision making authority.

Funding is intended for companies whose primary business is developing **video games**. Companies whose primary business has been other forms of interactive or digital media such as websites, mobile applications, interactive/immersive projects, and software applications that are not readily and easily identifiable as games and do not meet the criteria above will not be eligible.

Interested companies can be producing any number of titles, at various stages.

If you are uncertain about your eligibility, please contact Nicholas Klassen at nklassen@creativebc.com.

Eligible Costs

At least 75% of total costs must be spent on goods and services sourced from within British Columbia (i.e. paid to B.C.-based individuals, companies, or entities).

Eligible costs include but are not limited to:

- Promotion and marketing
- User acquisition strategies
- Labour and personnel
- Technology, content and design
- Expenses required to put content online or to create applications, including copyright clearance, documentation, design and development
- Technical and administrative expenses
- Travel costs (i.e. accommodation, airfare, per diem) to a maximum of 10% of the total allocation
- Legal, accounting, or other consulting fees
- Activities to open foreign markets

- Playtesting for QA and usability

Ineligible Costs

The following expenses are NOT eligible:

- Any expenses, activity or phase of work that are already directly supported by another CMF or Creative BC program
- Capital projects such as the purchase, renovation or improvement of land and buildings
- Working capital replenishment, repayment of loans or debt, operating deficits, capital losses and capital buybacks
- Retroactive costs (i.e. costs must be new at the time of notification of success and contracting)
- Any expenses related to the production of content that is not 100% owned and controlled/optioned (or intended to be optioned should the application be successful) by the applicant for a minimum of 12 months
- Any expenses related to the production of content identified as ineligible in section 3.2.2.2 of the CMF Interactive Digital Media Content Programs Core Guidelines

Application Procedures

Applicants will need to complete an online application that includes:

- Business Development Plan (a maximum of four pages) with a clear emphasis on how the requested funding will make a measurable difference to your current activities, whether it be significantly accelerating timelines or increasing the scale, quality, or reach of the work. The plan should also cover company track record, previous performance, vision and growth plan, market analysis and target audience goals, and plans for fostering talent and diversity.
- Company information, including shareholders' and directors' catalogue of previous video game titles developed.
- A listing of the applicant's previous work that satisfies the minimum eligibility as a mid-level or experienced company. (Note: Work for hire or other similar contract game development cannot be included in your count towards titles for eligibility. However, you can include it for informational purposes if desired, as it speaks to your overall ability to deliver and contribute to the growth of the gaming industry in B.C.)
- Basic information for each project on your current slate, including imminent upcoming releases, games in development, and future projects that may be in early conceptual stages but that are part of the company's long-term strategy.
- Information on key team members: Owner/Executive management, Producer, Executive Producer, Director (including Technical Director, Creative Director, Art Director, and Interactive Director), Senior Programmer, Designer, and Narrative Designer.
- Proposed budget for the activities in the plan.
- Estimated number of British Columbians who will be newly hired and paid to work, in the implementation of your business development plan.

A full checklist is available on the Creative BC website to guide you through the application process.

Applicants are limited to a single submission per company for each annual intake round. An owner may have an ownership interest in multiple applicant companies; however, only one associated company may be selected for funding. Ownership, for the purposes of this section, means the ability to exercise, directly or indirectly, control, joint control, or significant influence over a company, and does not include nominal ownership interests that do not confer such influence or control.

Successful recipients of the previous 2024 and 2025 rounds are ineligible for this year's intake round.

The application portal will open for submissions **August 21, 2026**.

Applications are due by **September 28, at 4:00 PM PT**.

Evaluation + Selection

We expect it will take at least nine weeks from the application close date to evaluate all applications.

The following criteria will be evaluated:

- Company track record and overall strategic vision;
- Clarity of Funding Request details (objectives, needs, and expected outcomes) and potential for positive impact on the video game sector in B.C.;
- The stability and financial health of the company.

See the Evaluation Matrix on the Creative BC website for a full breakdown.

Eligibility Review

An initial review for eligibility and missing documentation will be conducted by Creative BC staff. If documentation is missing, applicants will be informed and given a short period (maximum five days) to submit outstanding materials. Following this, incomplete or ineligible applications will be withdrawn with notification.

Advisory Panel

The competitive review will involve Creative BC and CMF staff as well as an advisory panel comprised of external industry professionals who represent a variety of backgrounds and relevant areas of expertise. Due to the sensitive and confidential nature of the application materials, any advisory members will be carefully vetted for conflict of interest.

All decisions will be confirmed via email. When an application is unsuccessful, a brief explanation can be provided upon request. Please note that all funding decisions are final.

Terms of Funding

Contracting

Creative BC and the CMF reserve the right to provide a reduced commitment from the requested funding. Successful applicants will enter into separate financing agreements with Creative BC and the CMF. Companies awarded funding are subject to a contract which will include a timeline, payment schedule and specific deliverables, according to the specifics of the business development plan. Generally, it will include two drawdown payments, plus an interim report. A completion date will be noted in the contract by which all deliverables should be submitted. The funding period is 12 months, with potential for extensions in extenuating circumstances.

CMF: funding is provided as a non-repayable contribution, except in case of transfer, sale, assignment, or other disposition of the project materials within the active funding period.

Creative BC: funding is provided as a non-recoupable advance.

Inclusivity in Games

Creative BC and CMF urge applicants to use the CMF-commissioned Inclusive Games Report as a tool to help create greater inclusion in the Canadian Video Game industry. The report makes the case for rethinking and adopting inclusive practices not just as a moral principle, but as a profitable economic initiative that can help reach new audiences and optimize workforce productivity.

Respectful Workplace + Client and Partner Code of Conduct

As a catalyst for, and investor in B.C.'s creative industries, Creative BC is committed to supporting a healthy ecosystem that thrives in a culture of mutual respect, dignity and inclusivity that is free from any form of harassment, discrimination, and violence. All companies that work with, or seek funding from, Creative BC are expected to adhere to Creative BC's Code of Conduct for Clients, Partners, and Stakeholders, implement policies and procedures for a harassment-free workplace, and comply with relevant laws. Creative BC is a signatory of the Creative Industries Code and expects all applicants, recipients, and partners to also adhere to this Code of Conduct. Learn more.

Forfeiture and Default

A completion date is noted on the Agreement by which all deliverables will be submitted. Should all materials not be provided by the completion date, the eligible applicant forfeits any outstanding drawdown amounts and the commitment will be reduced by this amount.

Should an eligible applicant be placed in default according to the terms of the Agreement, this limits the applicant, its principals and any parent or subsidiary companies from accessing further funding from Creative BC and CMF. In addition, Creative BC and CMF reserve the right to request immediate repayment of any funds advanced.

Acknowledgement

Successful recipients are required to publicly acknowledge the financial support of Creative BC and the CMF wherever other financiers are acknowledged. Projects are also encouraged to acknowledge support on social media where possible.

Appeal Process

Creative BC and CMF do not offer any form of appeal process for this program. Eligible applicants are welcome to apply for subsequent funding rounds. Please note that all funding decisions are final.

Questions?

Make sure to review the FAQ and Application Checklist on the Creative BC website. If you still have any questions about eligibility, or require additional supports to submit your application, please contact:

Nicholas Klassen
Analyst, Funding Programs
nklassen@creativebc.com