



## **OVERVIEW AND GOALS**

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The Bell Media Diverse Screenwriters Program presented by the Writers Guild of Canada is a one-week intensive television-training program designed to help emerging and mid-level film and television writers from diverse backgrounds develop and refine their original concepts for an English-language prime-time television series.

Up to eight (8) participating writers will be selected for each session of the Program. Participants will be selected on the basis of their submitted support material: a concept for an original series, writing samples and a letter of interest and intent.

The Program will connect screenwriters with a team of television experts including executive producers, showrunners, story editors, writers, producers and broadcast executives. Screenwriters will further develop their writings skills as well as learn how to pitch their projects and move them into development.

The Program will run for four consecutive years, with sessions held in Toronto and Vancouver each year.

The goals of the Bell Media Diverse Screenwriters Program are:

1. To bring more diverse writers into the talent pool.
2. To bring more diverse stories and perspectives to television screens.
3. To give emerging and mid-level diverse screenwriters the tools to develop and refine a television series concept.
4. To introduce writers to the tools and resources they need to develop and market their skills as professional screenwriters.

## **PROGRAM FORMAT**

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The program consists of three phases:

### **Phase One**

A one-week intensive training component. Training will be a combination of workshops in television story structure and character development and a mock story department to help participants further develop their concepts, bibles, beat sheets, outlines and drafts. Guest speakers will include writers, showrunners, network executives, and producers. Writers will learn how a series moves from concept to pitch to production and broadcast.

### **Phase Two**

An eight to twelve week writing period during which time writers will be working on their individual projects to refine their concepts further by developing their storylines and characters. Each writer will work with an assigned story editor and will be individually mentored for an average of one hour per week, depending on the preferences of both participant and mentor.

The Writers Guild of Canada presents the **Bell Media Diverse Screenwriters Program**

At the end of this period, participants will ideally have completed a minimum of one original script and one spec script in the format of their choice, as well as one mini-bible and one pitch document for their original series. These elements will then be submitted to an adjudication panel for evaluation. The panel will select one writer to advance to Phase Three.

Whether they are chosen to advance to Phase Three or not, participants will, at the end of Phase Two, have script material that is well-thought out and strong enough to act as a calling card to the industry.

### **Phase Three**

The selected writer will enter a paid internship in a Bell Media conventional or specialty series story department for the production season of a series.

### **WHEN AND WHERE**

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Training for the **Bell Media Diverse Screenwriters Program** will take place for five days in both Vancouver and Toronto. Check the website for exact dates.

Writers west of Ontario **must** apply to the Vancouver session. Writers east of Manitoba **must** apply to the Toronto session.

Out of town writers who are selected for the immersion will be awarded bursaries to cover their travel and accommodation expenses.

## **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

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Emerging and mid-level screenwriters may apply to the program with original, **English-Language** concepts for a television series suitable for broadcast.

Eligible writers living west of Ontario can apply **only** for the Vancouver session and must meet its deadline. Eligible writers living east of Manitoba can apply **only** for the Toronto session and must meet its deadline.

The program will encourage but not limit screenwriters to writing diverse stories.

Concepts in the genres of drama, comedy and children's programming are eligible. Projects may be half-hour series, one-hour series, mini-series, or movies of the week.

Eligible applicants must:

- Not currently be enrolled in any full-time school or university program.
- Demonstrate ownership of all underlying rights to the project with which they are applying.
- Be a Canadian citizen or Landed Immigrant.
- Demonstrate in their support material an understanding of the fundamentals of screenwriting such as story arcs and character development.
- Be able to make a commitment to the one-week intensive training and the subsequent 10-12 week mentoring process.
- If they are chosen, be in a position to accept a paid internship on an existing television series.

Selected screenwriters must be able to commit the time necessary to participate in this program. The week-long immersion sessions take place during the day and all selected writers must participate in all sessions.

## **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

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**You must submit two unbound, single-sided and collated copies of everything including the application form. Please submit your application by mail or by courier.**

**Your application must include the following items in the following order:**

1. Completed application form including diversity identification. (Available as a download)
2. A letter of interest and intent indicating why you believe this program to be right for you. You may also comment on how your diversity is, or isn't, currently reflected on television screen.
3. A curriculum vitae that includes screen credits and relevant education and training.
4. A current letter of reference from a recognized industry professional.
5. Series concept and a 1-2 page series synopsis briefly describing the story, characters, genre, format and target audience.
6. Writing samples: one feature-length script or one 1-hour series episode or two half-hour series episodes.  
**Spec scripts for any existing television series are not eligible.**
7. Chain of title documentation to indicate you have the right to develop the project.
8. A release form.

**Do not** put your application materials in any kind of binders or have the application bound in any way. We prefer that you use binder clips to hold all your materials together.

**Do not** include any glossy visual materials or DVDs of previous work with your application.

### **REMINDER: WE NEED TWO COMPLETE SETS OF YOUR APPLICATION PACKAGE**

**Applicants west of Ontario must apply to Vancouver. Applicants east of Manitoba must apply to Toronto.**

## **APPLICATION DEADLINE**

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Please see the WGC website ([www.wgc.ca](http://www.wgc.ca)) for appropriate deadlines for Vancouver and Toronto sessions.

Please do **not** email or fax your application. We must receive hard copies of all your documents.

### **DELIVER TO:**

Bell Media Diverse Screenwriters Program  
Writers Guild of Canada  
366 Adelaide Street West, Suite 401  
Toronto, ON M5V 1R9

## APPLICATION FORM

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1. Name \_\_\_\_\_ Company (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Province \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: M  F

Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Title and Genre of Original Script Material (submitted with the application)

\_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Logline for Original Script Material

\_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Title and Genre of Additional Writing Sample

\_\_\_\_\_

### 5. Are you currently working in the film and television industry and, if so, in what capacity:

Writer  Producer  Director  Other \_\_\_\_\_

### 6. Citizenship

Applicants must be either a Canadian citizen or have Landed Immigrant Status:

Canadian Citizen  Landed Immigrant

**7. Permanent Canadian Resident:** Yes  No

Applicants must be permanent residents of Canada and proof of citizenship and permanent residency may be requested.

**8. Diversity Self Identification**

The WGC asks that applicants self-identify their diversity to ensure that the program's diversity mandate is met. Federal privacy legislation protects the personal information you voluntarily provide on this application form.

For this Program diversity refers to Visible Minorities (including mixed ancestry), Person with Disabilities, Aboriginal Peoples, and other who self-identify as diverse.

Diversity Identification \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**SUBMISSION RELEASE**

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Title of Material: \_\_\_\_\_

Format of Material (script, concept and synopsis): \_\_\_\_\_

Brief Summary of Material: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that the Writers Guild of Canada (“WGC”) will be evaluating the Material as a basis for my possible participation in the Bell Media Diverse Screenwriters Program. I am signing this Submission Release (the “Release”) in the express understanding that the WGC is relying on this Release and my agreement herein. I acknowledge that the WGC will not review the Material without my execution of this Release.

I acknowledge that no fiduciary, agency, employment or confidential relationship now exists between the WGC and me, and I further acknowledge that no such relationship is established by execution of this Release and submission of the Material.

I warrant and represent that I am the sole author of the Material. I further warrant and represent that to the best of my knowledge the Material and all elements thereof are my original creations and do not violate any copyright, proprietary rights, rights of confidentiality or other rights of any person or entity and that no third party has any rights, title or interest therein or thereto. I agree to indemnify the WGC from and against any and all claims, expenses, losses or liabilities that may be asserted against the WGC or incurred by the WGC in connection with the Material arising from any breach or alleged breach of these warranties.

I understand that the WGC will not intentionally use the Material or any part thereof for any purpose other than provided herein.

I have retained at least one copy of the Material, and I hereby release the WGC of all liability for loss or destruction of, or damage to, said Material.

This release shall inure to the benefit of, and be binding upon, each of us and our respective heirs, successors, representatives, assigns and licensees. Should any provision or part of any provision of this Release be void or unenforceable, such provision or part thereof shall be deemed omitted, and replaced by a legal provision which most closely reflects the parties intent as expressed herein. As so modified this Release shall remain in full force and effect. This Release shall be construed according to the laws of the Province of Ontario without reference to conflicts of law provisions. This Release may not be changed, modified, terminated or discharged except by a document signed by both parties.

The WGC shall be under no obligation to retain the Material or to return the Material or any copies thereof.

I hereby state that I have read and understand this Release, that no representations of any kind have been made to me other than as contained in this Release, that there are no prior or contemporaneous agreements, either oral or written, in effect between us pertaining to the Material, and that this Release states our entire understanding and agreement.

Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2011

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (please print) : \_\_\_\_\_

**DECLARATION OF OWNERSHIP**

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I, the undersigned, hereby declare that I am the sole author of the \_\_\_\_\_  
[insert format, ie script, concept and synopsis] entitled “ \_\_\_\_\_ ”  
 (“the Work”) and own all rights including copyright the Work.

Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2011

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (please print) : \_\_\_\_\_

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

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### **Do I have to be a member of the WGC to apply to the program?**

No.

### **To which session should I apply?**

Eligible writers living west of Ontario can apply only for the Vancouver session, and must meet the deadline. Eligible writers living east of Manitoba can apply only for the Toronto session, and must meet the deadline.

### **How will my project be evaluated?**

Applications will be reviewed by a four-person jury made up of two three experienced screenwriters who are WGC members and one representative from Bell Media. Script material will be divided among jury members who will evaluate and score the material. The jury will meet to defend their scores and select a list of invited participants.

### **How will participants for the Program be chosen?**

Participants will be chosen on the strength of their creative material and its development potential as a television series.

### **May I submit electronically?**

No. We need the hard copies of the required submission materials so we can send the materials to the jury for evaluation.

### **How will I know if I've been selected?**

If you are selected we will notify you by phone. If you are not selected, you will be notified by mail.

### **May I send in additional support material over and above what is required?**

No. We want everyone to be on equal footing for evaluation and will therefore only review the required materials.

### **What do you mean by 'emerging' screenwriter?**

An emerging writer has completed all basic education and training in screenwriting, film and television production, film studies, and/or any field related to narrative and story structure. An emerging writer may also have worked in the industry in a capacity other than as a writer or may be making a transition from another kind of writing to screenwriting. Please be aware that the program is designed as a professional screenwriting training program for those with some knowledge of screenwriting rather than a career change program or Screenwriting 101.

### **How is diversity determined?**

Diversity refers to Visible Minorities (including mixed ancestry), Person with Disabilities, Aboriginal Peoples, and other who choose to self-identify their unique diversity.

### **Do I have to self-identify my diversity?**

The program was specifically developed to bring more diverse screenwriters into the industry. If you do not self-identify we will have no way of knowing if you are eligible for the program.

### **Will my self-identified diversity affect the evaluation of my application?**

Applications will be evaluated on the basis of the strength of the creative materials submitted with your application.

The Writers Guild of Canada presents the **Bell Media Diverse Screenwriters Program**

**May I apply if I am a non-diverse screenwriter but have a diverse project?**

No. The program is aimed specifically at diverse screenwriters.

**What do I need to include in my letter of interest and statement of intent?**

It's important for us to know that this program is right for you and that you have the motivation to follow through on the required work. We want to make sure that you are serious about pursuing a career in screenwriting.

We would also like to know whether you currently see your particular perspective or diversity on television and, if applicable, how you might bring that perspective to the screen.

**What are the acceptable program genres?**

You may submit drama, comedy or children's projects. This can include movies-of-the-week, hour-long dramatic series, and half-hour series.

**Note:** All categories of programs are eligible for Phase One and Phase Two of the program. However, the final internship phase of the program will be in the writing room of a prime-time television series on a Bell Media network or specialty service and may not be in the same genre or format that you are working on.

Ineligible formats include game shows, reality-based series including home improvement and food shows, documentaries, documentary series, and news shows.

**Why can't I submit a spec script for an existing television series?**

Spec scripts will show us that you can write within an existing framework but they won't reveal your abilities to create original projects.

**May I apply with more than one project?**

No. We will accept only one project per applicant.

**May I apply if a producer has already optioned my project?**

No. Projects that have already been optioned are not eligible. You may, however, apply with a different project.

**May I apply with a co-writer?**

No. There are a limited number of places in the Immersion. If you are a co-writer on a project and wish to apply to the Program, you will need to secure a release from your co-writer giving you the right to submit the project.

**What financial assistance will I receive?**

There are no fees for participants in the Program. The training will take place in Toronto and Vancouver and successful out of town applicants will be awarded a bursary to cover their travel and accommodation expenses.

**What is my time commitment if I am accepted into the Program?**

The Program is aimed at screenwriters who intend to make a career in the film and television industry. You must be able to participate in the full week of training. You must also commit to developing your project and working with your story editor over the two to three months following the training week.

**What if I'm selected and then can't make it. Will I be able to enter the program the following year?**

You will not automatically be accepted for the following year. You will need to re-apply and your project will be evaluated with other projects from that year.