



Hot Docs Five-Year Plan 2017-2021: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Updates

PROGRAMMING, FUNDING AND SPECIAL INITIATIVES

Hot Docs commitment: Where appropriate, develop strategic initiatives that operate alongside core industry programming, production funds and other activities that are designed specifically to enhance participation from identified underrepresented groups.

2020 update: Hot Docs currently manages six active production funds. Three of these funds are exclusively designed to reach historically underrepresented groups, including Canadian filmmakers who are Indigenous, Francophone, Deaf and/or have a disability, racialized and/or persons of colour (CrossCurrents Canada Doc Fund), international filmmakers from underrepresented and marginalized communities (CrossCurrents International Doc Fund), and filmmakers who primarily live and work in Africa (Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs Fund). As of August 2020, these funds have collectively awarded over \$1.55M to 99 documentary projects. The Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs Fund also provides mentorship and training support to recipients, including travel support to attend the Hot Docs Festival and an African-based market event, and access to industry experts.

Representing diverse lived experiences is a core priority for the organization's other funds, and demographic tracking on all recipients will be introduced in 2021.

Hot Docs also administers the Canadian Storytellers Project, which provides professional development and training programs to Canadian filmmakers who are Indigenous, Francophone, Deaf and/or have a disability, racialized and/or persons of colour. This includes 10 fellowships annually for the Doc Accelerator program at Hot Docs Festival. Following the Festival, fellows are matched with an established documentary production company in their region for a paid professional development work placement. The Project also supports Doc Ignite labs, which bring training to groups, regions and communities that have limited access to such opportunities. The labs provide filmmakers across Canada with professional development curriculums on such topics as audience engagement, marketing, and distribution.

Further expansion and enhancements to these programs are actively being explored.

Hot Docs commitment (new): Hot Docs will launch new programming streams dedicated to showcasing diverse perspectives and that respond and contribute to wider conversations about race.

2020 update: In summer 2020, the EDI Working Group (see below) developed a monthly screening series *For Viola*, which will center BIPOC filmmakers and BIPOC-led stories. The series



is curated by BIPOC programmers and, in an effort to minimize barriers to audience participation, all screenings will be accessible free of charge.

Hot Docs commitment: Update tracking procedures for film submissions and Festival programming to track filmmakers from demographic groups noted in the Statement of Values for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, and correlate definitions where appropriate with legislated and/or government definitions, including best practices of partner arts councils.

2020 update: Festival submissions and industry registration processes were updated in 2019 to track demographic information about participating filmmakers and delegates, to better identify underrepresented groups and to inform future programming and engagement strategies. Results are only available to staff in aggregate and all information was collected both anonymously and voluntarily. Similar tracking mechanisms for officially selected Festival films and for industry funds and market programs are under review for 2021, with the goal to ensure cross-organizational alignment on data collection practices.

Hot Docs commitment: Apply a democratic and broad-minded curatorial perspective in programming films for the Festival and continue to ensure that the programming team represents diverse perspectives in its composition.

2020 update: The Hot Docs programming team continues to evolve in terms of cultural diversity and programming rationale. To help provide informed and professional perspectives in the selection process, the programming team includes experienced programmer representation from people of colour, Indigenous, Francophone, LGBTQ and transgender programmers.

Hot Docs commitment: Ensure that the Festival program represents a broad view of Canadian culture and perspectives, including maintaining a minimum representation of 25% Canadian content at the Festival, and continually uphold a strong gender balance and high level of cultural diversity and equity among invited filmmakers.

2020 update: The Festival continues to deliver a program that is balanced with regard to gender parity. In 2020, 30% of the program was made up of Canadian films, with 56 countries represented overall in the Festival program. Increased numbers of films with a focus on stories from racialized filmmakers and films about cultural diversity, LGBTQ issues and disability were screened, to excellent audience response. The introduction of formal mechanisms for officially selected Festival films that would allow the organization to track how filmmakers self-identify are under review for introduction in 2021.



Hot Docs commitment: Ensure that all externally populated selection committees (e.g. production fund selection committees and Forum selection committees) maintain diversity in their memberships and/or in the membership of their pre-reading support committees, and appropriately reflect the communities of the applying filmmakers.

2020 update: All selection committees for funds and programs that target specific communities (e.g. CrossCurrents Doc Funds, Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs Fund, Doc Accelerator) have committee members and/or readers who represent applicant communities (i.e. Indigenous, Francophone, Deaf and/or have a disability, racialized and/or persons of colour; filmmakers working and living in Africa). In addition, selection committees for funds and programs that do not have a target community, per se, are generally populated by experts, staff, and filmmakers who bring diverse lived experiences to the table.

Hot Docs commitment: On all Festival and industry submissions, ask applying filmmakers to describe their relationship to their film's subject community, so that this information can be considered by the programmers and/or juries.

2020 update: This question is asked on the Festival entry form and other market and Funds forms. The information supplied is used to help the programming and jury teams evaluate films. Additionally, where the team was unsure of the filmmakers' relationship to their subject community, outreach was undertaken to gain further clarity to assist in making informed programming decisions.

AUDIENCE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Hot Docs commitment: Continue to increase audience reach by connecting with diverse neighborhoods and programming content that vividly reflects Toronto's ethno-cultural richness, including developing venue scenarios that bring public screenings to communities beyond the Festival downtown core.

2020 update: Hot Docs, through its Docs For Schools program, brings free documentary programming to approximately 116,000 students and 91 school boards across Canada, through a combination of in-cinema and in-school screenings. Educators are also provided lesson plans that link the films to the provincial curriculum. The participating schools are representative of Toronto and the wider province's overall student population, with participants coming from a diverse array of communities, including many schools located in communities prioritized by the City as Neighborhood Improvement Areas.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all live 2020 Festival screenings were replaced by digital screenings. However, in past editions of the Festival, special screenings have been organized at the Aga Khan Museum, Scarborough Town Centre, and YMCA locations outside of the



downtown core. Reaching diverse audiences by bringing the Festival to different neighborhoods within the GTA, and especially outside of the downtown core, remains a priority for future live editions of the Festival.

Hot Docs commitment: Reduce barriers to participation in the Festival by providing a broad array of free programming, available to all communities.

2020 update: Hot Docs has continued to provide free daytime screenings for students and seniors across the entire Festival, with approximately 15,000 tickets distributed in 2019. In addition, the Festival annually presents numerous free screenings and live events, including free IMAX family programming at Ontario Place Cinesphere. Hot Docs also distributes complimentary tickets by participating in the Toronto Public Library's cultural access MAP program.

Hot Docs commitment: Engage community partners to attract and welcome audience members from across Toronto's diverse ethno-cultural landscape, including: developing co-presentations with other arts and film groups that showcase work by and about these communities; working with social service organizations and youth groups interested in arts programming; and partnering with consulates and umbrella organizations that maintain strong community ties. Wherever possible, seek to reduce or eliminate barriers to Festival participation through free or discounted tickets.

2020 update: In 2019, over 5,200 free tickets were redeemed through partnership initiatives for the Festival, which included: 21 co-presentations with film and other cultural organizations (including the imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival, Inside Out LGBT Film Festival, JAYU's Human Rights Film Festival, Koerner Hall at The Royal Conservatory, Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto (LIFT), Planet in Focus International Environmental Film Festival, ReelAbilities Film Festival: Toronto, Regent Park Film Festival, Small World Music Society, Syria Film Festival, The Dance Current, The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, The Toronto Palestine Film Festival, Toronto After Dark Film Festival, Toronto Black Film Festival, Toronto Fringe Festival, Toronto Jewish Film Festival, Toronto Korean Film Festival, Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival, Women in Film & Television–Toronto (WIFT-T) and Workman Arts); bulk ticket giveaway partnerships with 10 cultural and social service organizations, including Volunteer Toronto, YMCA Toronto, United Way GTA, Bloor Culture Corridor, Institute for Canadian Citizenship, Toronto Public Library, Big Brothers Big Sisters, CultureLink Settlement & Community Services, Covenant House, and Woodgreen Community Services; offers to 24 organizations serving the Deaf, Blind and Disability communities, include three meetup co-hosting partnerships at the Festival arranged with ReelAbilities Toronto, Deaf Spectrum and Bob Rumball Canadian Centre for Excellence for the Deaf; offers to 48 ESL and low adult literacy organizations; offers to 16 community centres and other organizations serving low-income



communities; offers to 15 children and youth service organizations for family oriented programming; and others.

In 2020, due to COVID-19 and the rapid switch to a digital format for the festival, there was a reduced amount of free programming that could be delivered to partners. However, Hot Docs continued to work with a similar roster of co-presentation partners and is reviewing how to better disseminate free access to films when using a virtual format.

Hot Docs commitment: Regularly review and revise marketing and communications plan to better achieve audience attendance and investment in Festival and Cinema programs to meet the organization's diversity goals.

2020 update: Marketing and communications plans for the Festival and Cinema are regularly reviewed and revised to better achieve attendance and investment by more diverse audiences. In past years, films selected for both Cinema and Festival were identified for expanded awareness of programming in diverse communities. In 2020, due to COVID-19, most marketing and communications plans were significantly altered to adapt to a virtual format.

Hot Docs commitment: Continue to be sector leaders with regard to accessibility standards, including developing partnerships that help filmmakers access funding or resources to add closed captioning and/or described audio to their films, and budgeting ASL interpretation or live captioning, where needed, into Hot Docs' operations.

2020 update: Hot Docs further enhanced its accessibility offerings during the Festival. In 2020, Hot Docs was able to present 40 screenings with closed captioning of the films and filmmaker Q&As. In 2019, an expanded roster of 25 films with open caption was introduced. Due to COVID-19, the virtual format of the 2020 festival allowed audience members to individually choose to display captions. Hot Docs ensured that all new Canadian features in English (or partial English) were presented with either closed captions or open captions.

STAFFING, VOLUNTEERS AND TEAM

Hot Docs commitment (new): Hot Docs will establish an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Working Group comprised of team members from throughout the organization, with the goal of advancing EDI and anti-racism initiatives.

2020 Update: An EDI Working Group was formally established in summer 2020 and meets weekly. It is comprised of staff members from across departments and management levels. Working Group membership is intentional regarding (1) BIPOC representation, (2) representing



diversity of lived experienced and (3) providing opportunities for non-BIPOC staff to collaborate and learn. The primary scope of the Hot Docs EDI Working Group is to develop opportunities and resources that support the advancement the organization's internal capacity with regard to anti-racism and equity, diversity and inclusion. The secondary scope of the Hot Docs EDI Working Group is to provide recommendations, perspective, feedback and ideas to Hot Docs teams that are advancing EDI-related external programs, best practices and initiatives across the organization and, where appropriate and required, provide additional support to those teams. The EDI Working Group is also responsible for developing monthly all-staff sessions to advance learnings and conversations within the organization related to anti-racism and EDI.

Hot Docs commitment: In support of the organization's Statement of Values for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, work with an expert consultant and conduct an external review of Hot Docs hiring, succession planning, performance management and recruitment practices with the aim of further advancing the organization's equity and inclusion goals amongst staff.

2020 update: A third-party review of Hot Docs' employment systems was conducted in 2019. The report focused on diversity and inclusion, and specifically considered recruitment and retention practices, including attraction, hiring and succession planning. The intent of the report is to codify best practices by the organization with respect to diverse hires and to provide practical recommendations on 'planning forward' towards diverse representation at all levels of the organization, including and especially the senior management level, through: the development of succession plans to fill senior management positions as they become available; an internal and external pipeline of diverse talent to feed into the succession plans; and, mechanisms in performance evaluations to hold staff accountable to hire for diversity. Other outcomes of the report included: updating and codifying job posting language to support equity and inclusion goals; formalizing mechanisms for job postings to reach underrepresented communities; and formalizing diversity requirements for both hiring panels and candidate pools. The report's recommendations were formally adopted into Hot Docs' official Policies and Procedures. A follow-up review on the impact of these policy changes within the organization and how to further support these goals is to be scheduled.

Hot Docs commitment: Maintain and disseminate to all new hires the organization's Statement of Values for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion to help inform board and staff recruitment and ongoing programming and operations.

2020 update: An updated Staff Onboarding Package was developed in 2019, to help orientate new staff to the organization. The package includes information about Hot Docs' Policies and Procedures and staff resources. The Statement of Values is included in this package and hiring managers are encouraged to discuss it with their staff to review how and where the values can be lived within the context of their work.



Hot Docs commitment: Ensure that recruitment for all volunteer advisory committees, including the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema Advisory Board, the Artistic Advisory Committee, the Hot Docs 30 Committee and the Teachers Advisory Council is pursued with the guiding principles outlined in the new Statement of Values for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

2020 update: New recruitment for these bodies, as well as for the organization's Board of Directors, continued to be pursued with the guiding principles outlined in the new Statement of Values for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. While progress has been made in diversifying the representation on these bodies, continued and sustained efforts in all future recruitment must be maintained to better reflect the communities Hot Docs seeks to serve.

Hot Docs commitment: Explore and seek to implement professional development workshops or similar activities for the organization's managers, with a focus on strategies to develop inclusive workplaces through recruitment and hiring, improve communication skills and manage talent.

2020 update: With the support of a third-party consultant, Hot Docs' volunteer department developed an anti-bias workshop program that was made mandatory for all staff, building on programs already offered to Festival volunteers. Future iterations of this workshop are under development, and Hot Docs will continue to provide and require anti-bias training for all staff.

Hot Docs commitment: Ensure all job postings are advertised with clear language, especially when the position's responsibilities include engagement with diverse communities; widely post all positions on key charitable and media sector job sites and promote through Hot Docs' social media accounts to ensure visibility. Develop a list of partner arts and non-profit organizations that serve diverse communities through which postings can be further disseminated. Ensure all hiring managers take proactive steps to interview candidates representing a mix of potential backgrounds and lived experiences.

2020 update: All job postings were updated to reflect updated language that was developed in consultation with a third-party inclusivity expert. A working list of third-party arts, culture and community organizations that serve underrepresented communities was developed and all new job postings are circulated to that network of organizations. Hiring managers and interview panels are required take proactive steps to interview candidates representing a diverse mix of backgrounds and lived experiences.

Hot Docs commitment: Continue to develop Hot Docs' volunteer corps with inclusivity goals as a top priority and develop outreach and community partnerships that attract a broad



range of volunteers to the organization. Reward and cultivate key volunteers from diverse communities to become more involved with the organization.

2020 update: Hot Docs volunteer corps is actively recruited from different communities across Toronto, representing a diverse range of lived experiences. Hot Docs volunteers receive anti-bias training to help them welcome and interact with Toronto audiences.

Hot Docs commitment: Ensure that all Festival and Cinema staff undergo training with regards to accessibility, including fully reviewing Hot Docs' accessibility policies and best practices and provincial AODA requirements.

2020 update: Hot Docs continued to ensure that mandatory AODA training was incorporated into the onboarding process for all Cinema and Festival staff and volunteers. In 2019, accessibility training for all customer-facing staff and volunteers was updated to reflect Hot Docs' continued increases to its accessibility practices, and a larger focus was placed on situational training.