

September 30, 2020

To: Lalita Krishna and Jennifer Holness
Chairs, CSIF
Toronto, Ontario

Dear Lalita and Jennifer,

The Documentary Organization of Canada (DOC) is pleased to write this letter in support of the reinvigoration and rebranding of the CIFVF as the Canadian Independent Screen Fund for BPOC Creators (CISF).

For two decades the CIFVF was a key source of financing for independent Canadian film and television projects, especially those helmed by smaller and start-up production companies. Disbanded in 2009, the filmmaking community rallied to keep the fund afloat as a legal entity.

In this historic moment of widespread advocacy for racial justice, there is a unique opportunity for the federal government to reinstate the fund, redefine its mandate and fill a gap in the existing funding landscape to ensure BPOC creators and producers have culturally attuned support and appropriate access to funding for their projects.

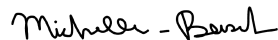
Very few BPOC-led companies were able to access early Phase-One COVID-relief funds administered through CMF & Telefilm which points to the longstanding underrepresentation of BPOC-led companies in this space. It also underlines the systemic barriers within these legacy institutions (eg. culturally skewed evaluation criteria, unconscious bias amongst staff and gatekeepers who are not culturally representative, etc.) which has resulted in projects helmed by BPOC companies often not receiving mainstream support, encouragement or funding.

DOC supports the position that the Canadian screen industry in general and BPOC producers specifically will benefit from a fund designed and administered by a board that represents the BPOC community. The CISF will be uniquely positioned to support BPOC creators and producers and to help accelerate a deeper awareness of systemic racism within the broader industry and develop shared understandings of how we can work together for change.

While DOC supports the earmarking of dedicated funds within legacy institutions for BIPOC communities, we believe that at this stage in time, BPOC-focused and BPOC-led funds like the CISF are vital to ensuring that Canada's rich pool of talented BPOC creators and BPOC-lead production companies are equitably supported and enabled to flourish.

As an organization representing 800 diverse documentary creators from all parts of Canada, we are committed to lending our support to the creation of new and meaningful opportunities for BPOC screen creators.

Sincerely,



Michelle van Beusekom
Executive Director



Ina Fichman
Board Chair