



# TALENT LEVELS CHART

---

The Talent Levels Chart is a framework for understanding career progression across four key roles in the Canadian screen industry: **Writers, Directors, Producers, and Tech/Crew.**

Developed by the **Black Screen Office (BSO)**, this chart is offered as a practical tool for the broader industry. It is designed to help practitioners identify where they are in their career, understand what the next stage of development looks like, and locate the support, funding, and opportunities most relevant to their level. The goal is to ensure that no one wastes time pursuing resources that are not the right fit.

This is one of several structural interventions developed by BSO to create more equitable conditions for Black professionals in the screen industry. It was shaped by direct input from Black screen professionals across the country, gathered through BSO's National Roundtables and through our career accelerator programs.

The talent levels concept was originally adapted from *The Next 25 Years*, Screen Australia Indigenous Department Strategy, 2019, and have been rewritten to reflect the Canadian screen industry context.

*These levels are not rigid categories. Career paths in the screen industry are rarely linear, and not every descriptor will apply to every practitioner.*

# TALENT LEVELS

	Breaking In	Emerging	Mid-Career	Established
Writers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrated interest in screen writing as a career path</li> <li>• No formal screen writing credits</li> <li>• Non-funded</li> <li>• Enrolled in film, television, or screen arts writing programs, or self-directed learning</li> <li>• Writing speculatively, developing scripts without commission</li> <li>• Entering writing competitions, labs, or open calls</li> <li>• Participating in writers' groups or workshops to develop craft</li> <li>• No established industry contacts or broadcaster relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively pursuing screen writing as a professional career</li> <li>• Has a portfolio of completed spec scripts</li> <li>• Has at least one produced short film script or equivalent screen credit</li> <li>• 1–2 credits in related roles (e.g. script coordinator, script reader, or writers' room assistant)</li> <li>• Participated in a writers' room, formal mentorship, or industry writing program</li> <li>• Seeking development funding through producers and funding bodies</li> <li>• Pitching to producers and beginning to develop industry relationships</li> <li>• Beginning to earn income from screen writing work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustaining a full-time or near full-time income through screen writing work</li> <li>• Established track record of produced credits across multiple projects</li> <li>• Working on staff or in senior roles within writers' rooms</li> <li>• Story editing or script editing credits</li> <li>• Original projects in active development with producers or broadcasters</li> <li>• Represented by an agent or manager</li> <li>• Established relationships with producers, broadcasters, and funding bodies</li> <li>• Beginning to be approached for commissions rather than solely seeking them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustained track record of produced credits across film, television, and/or other platforms</li> <li>• Creating and owning original intellectual property</li> <li>• Showrunner credits or equivalent creative leadership roles</li> <li>• Exercising significant influence over the development and production process</li> <li>• Consistent domestic and international opportunities</li> <li>• Commanding premium rates and sought out for commissions</li> <li>• Represented by an established agency</li> <li>• Industry recognition through awards, critical acclaim, or festival success</li> <li>• Sought out as a mentor or collaborator by emerging and mid-career writers</li> </ul>

	Breaking In	Emerging	Mid-Career	Established
Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrated interest in directing as a career path</li> <li>• No formal directing credits</li> <li>• Non-funded</li> <li>• Enrolled in film, television, or screen arts training programs, or self-directed learning</li> <li>• Making short films, student projects, or online content independently</li> <li>• Volunteering or observing on set where possible</li> <li>• Beginning to research industry pathways, funding bodies, and professional networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively pursuing directing as a professional career</li> <li>• Has completed a director-specific observership, shadowing program, or placement</li> <li>• Has an established portfolio of short-form directing work</li> <li>• 1–2 credits in related roles (e.g. on-set, post-production, or writing)</li> <li>• Actively networking with producers, writers, and industry peers</li> <li>• Attached to at least one funded or greenlit project</li> <li>• Attending screen industry events and conferences</li> <li>• Beginning to earn income from screen-related work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistently employed across multiple long-form productions with an established directing credit track record</li> <li>• Established relationships with producers, writers, and broadcasters</li> <li>• Exercising creative choice in selecting projects</li> <li>• Working with progressively larger budgets and crews</li> <li>• Has developed a distinct directorial voice and style</li> <li>• Represented by an agent or manager</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustained track record of completed long-form productions across film, television, or documentary</li> <li>• Directing high-budget productions with full creative authority</li> <li>• Consistent domestic and international opportunities</li> <li>• Ability to attract financing, talent, and broadcaster interest to projects</li> <li>• Exercising influence over project development, not just execution</li> <li>• Commanding premium rates</li> <li>• Represented by an established agency</li> <li>• Industry recognition through awards, critical acclaim, or festival success</li> <li>• Sought out as a mentor or collaborator by emerging and mid-career directors</li> </ul>

## Breaking In

## Emerging

## Mid-Career

## Established

### Producers

- Demonstrated interest in producing as a career path
- No formal producing credits
- Non-funded
- Enrolled in film, television, or screen media programs, or self-directed learning
- May be coming from adjacent industries (e.g. theatre, journalism, or online content creation)
- Volunteering or assisting on productions to gain practical experience
- Beginning to understand the funding landscape and industry structures
- No established industry contacts or broadcaster relationships

- Actively pursuing producing as a professional career
- Producing credits on short films, web series, verticals or micro-budget productions
- Has received initial funding from provincial, federal, or arts council sources
- Developing projects in collaboration with writers and directors
- Beginning to build relationships with broadcasters and funding bodies
- Practising hands-on line producing skills across all stages of production
- Developing understanding of rights, contracts, and financing agreements
- Attending industry markets, events, and conferences
- Beginning to earn income from producing work

- Sustained full-time income from producing work
- Track record of completed and delivered productions
- Established relationships with broadcasters, funding bodies, and distributors
- Slate of projects in active development
- Own company established or operating within a formal partnership
- Navigating complex financing structures across multiple funding sources
- Beginning to attract international co-production interest
- Managing crews, budgets, and production timelines at scale
- Working with an entertainment lawyer for deal-making and contracts
- Member of relevant industry associations (e.g. CMPA, APQM)

- Sustained track record of commercially and critically successful productions
- Robust slate of projects in various stages of development and production
- Approached for and securing Executive Producer roles
- Established international co-production relationships and sales track record
- Attracting major talent, financing, and broadcaster interest to projects
- Competitive for significant provincial, federal, and international funding
- Commanding premium fees
- Member of relevant industry associations (e.g. CMPA, APQM)
- Industry recognition through awards, critical acclaim, or festival success
- Sought out as a mentor or collaborator by emerging and mid-career producers

## Breaking In

## Emerging

## Mid-Career

## Established

### Tech/Crew

- Demonstrated interest in a specific crew or technical role
- No formal screen credits
- Enrolled in relevant technical, vocational, or screen media training programs, or self-directed learning
- Building foundational knowledge of production equipment and workflows
- Beginning to understand industry roles, departments, and hierarchies
- Making self-directed or student projects to develop technical skills
- Seeking opportunities through volunteering, student productions, or set visits
- No established industry contacts or professional network

- Actively pursuing a professional career in a specific crew or technical role
- Earning initial income from screen production work
- Employed in junior crew roles with screen credits
- Beginning to specialize in a specific department or craft
- Developing a professional reputation for reliability and competence on set
- Becoming a trusted hire for returning producers and productions
- Building relationships with key crew, directors, and producers
- Developing understanding of industry rates, agreements, and unions
- Attending industry events and building a professional network

- Sustaining full-time income from screen production work
- Operating at a senior level within their specific department or craft
- Union member in good standing
- Consistently booked across multiple productions
- Sought out by producers and directors for their specific skills and expertise
- Working on progressively larger and more ambitious productions
- Developing a strong professional reputation within their craft
- Mentoring junior crew members
- Building long-term relationships with key producers, directors, and production companies

- Recognised as a leader and authority in their specific craft
- Working at the highest level of production domestically and internationally
- Commanding premium rates and selecting projects based on creative interest
- Long-term relationships with top-tier directors, producers, and production companies
- Consistent demand from major productions across Canada and internationally
- Industry recognition through awards, nominations, or peer acknowledgement
- Active union member with strong standing in their craft community
- Invited to participate in industry events, panels, or training programs
- Mentoring and shaping the next generation of practitioners