

## **Appeals policy: Local Journalism Initiative**

### **Purpose:**

This policy is intended to provide applicants with a fair, transparent and consistent process to appeal decisions related to funding applications submitted to News Media Canada's Local Journalism Initiative (LJI) portfolio.

The appeals process is designed to review whether a procedural error occurred during the original assessment of the application; or allow an applicant to demonstrate that the terms of the contribution agreement have been improperly applied.

### **Scope:**

This policy applies to all applicants who have received a formal decision regarding their application to News Media Canada's Local Journalism Initiative funding cycle. News Media Canada will not consider any new items that were not submitted in the initial application, during the funding period, and/or when submitting reports.

Appeals do not guarantee a reversal of the original outcome.

### **Grounds for appeal:**

An appeal request may be submitted only on one or more of the following grounds:

- Efforts to resolve the applicant's complaint could not be adequately addressed through exchanges with LJI staff;
- The complainant can address a procedural error that occurred which materially affected the final decision;
- The applicant can demonstrate evidence of bias; a conflict of interest; or other unfair treatment afforded to the application during the decision-making process

Disagreement with the decision alone does not constitute valid grounds for an appeal.

### **Appeal submission process:**

Applicants seeking an appeal must have undertaken efforts to address concerns with LJI staff on one of the above grounds before seeking a formal appeal.

Applicants must submit a request to appeal a decision within 7 working days to the program director following the conclusion of the dialogue with LJI staff.

Appeal applications must include the following materials (in writing):

- The full name of the applicant and their LJI application number
- A clear statement on the grounds for appeal
- An explanation of why efforts to resolve the dispute at the staff level was unsuccessful; and

- Supporting documentation and/or evidence.

News Media Canada will reject appeals based on requests to:

- Review the eligibility of an applicant;
- Failure to follow instructions regarding the submission of an application (e.g. the application is incomplete or not submitted on time);
- Composition of the selection committee;
- Value or duration of the financial contribution; and/or
- The refusal of an application for funding.

All appeals must be submitted by email to: [LJI@newsmediacanada.ca](mailto:LJI@newsmediacanada.ca).

### **Appeal review process:**

Appeals will first be examined by a group of three independent reviewers, selected from the LJI pool of reviewers. This group of reviewers will have no conflicts of interest regarding the application. The review will focus on whether the decision follows established policies and criteria.

This group will review the application and the complainants' concerns, evaluating the merits of the appeal, and issue a decision.

If the applicant remains unsatisfied but the group of reviewers finds the appeal carries some merit, a third-party ombudsperson may be contracted to review the concerns and issue a final decision.

### **Timeline:**

In keeping with the News Media Canada's service standards, applicants will receive written confirmation of the receipt of their application within 2 business days.

A decision from the review panel will be communicated within 10 business days, unless additional time is required.

### **Possible outcomes:**

The appeal process will provide applicants with one of three decisions:

- 1) Upholding the original decision
- 2) Modifying the original decision
- 3) Reversing the decision

### **Confidentiality:**

All applications of appeal, and related materials, will be treated confidentially and used solely for the purpose of reviewing the appeal. Applicants cannot publicly share or discuss details of the appeal while the process is underway. Breach of this provision will result in the appeal being immediately dismissed.

**Review:**

News Media Canada reserves the right to amend this policy at any time to ensure compliance with legal, regulatory, or operational requirements.