



THE COMMUNITY RADIO INITIATIVE (CRI)

Strengthening Local Canadian Media
Through Community Radio

Overview

The local media is in trouble. In the last decade, according to the Local News Project, we have lost more than **six hundred** local news outlets, and **thousands** of local journalists since 2008. Part of the solution must be support for community media.



While investing in the CBC is important, it cannot solve the problem of declining local news. Instead of investing singularly in the national broadcaster, local news is best supported by investing in local media. Success will come by strengthening all parts of the Canadian broadcasting system.

Community, Indigenous, and campus broadcasters are critical to Canadians, particularly outside of urban centres.

They are at the core of their communities, are vital in times of emergency, promote local arts and culture, and they are among the few still invested in covering local news.

... because they are all part of that community.



\$95 000 invested in a community radio station will strengthen the station as a whole. With a strong station comes a network of volunteers, each of whom will become part of the team bringing local stories to the listeners.

Because each of these volunteers are part of the community, they are trusted by the community far more than social or major media outlets.

It means that a small investment can ensure the entire station is operational, functional and could allow **hundreds** of people to generate stories, promote information and share their passions - while that same amount invested in the CBC gets you **one** full-time reporter.



In this document, we are proposing a solution. The Community Radio Initiative (CRI) will cost \$30 million dollars annually.

A fraction of what has been invested in the CBC yet it will have a much greater impact on the more than **255** community, Indigenous, and campus stations and the Canadians who rely on them.

Their licenses require that they are all incorporated as not-for-profit organizations, and as such, every dollar invested is reinvested in their community.

Community Radio



There are more than 255 CRTC-licensed community, Indigenous, and campus radio stations in Canada.

They broadcast programming in about 55 **languages**, including **15 Indigenous** languages.

There are 55 Indigenous stations, 71 stations that operate in French, and 30 of them serve Official

Language Minority Communities (OLMCs) across Canada.

The diversity of languages and their connection to local communities make them critical in times of emergencies.

In the case of a forest fire, for example, they're involved from the beginning, communicating evacuation orders, letting residents know exactly where the flames are, and which roads are safe to travel.

In the following days, they will update power outages, direct volunteers, and indicate where to get fresh water.



Then, as the community rebuilds, they are available to cover government supports, insurance claims, and to monitor municipal decisions for the future.

Beyond emergencies, community stations cover city hall, courts, local sports, school boards, and a wide range of other municipal affairs.

More than 2.4 million Canadians tune in regularly to community media, and of those, the majority of listeners live outside a major Canadian city.



While private broadcasters are lobbying to play fewer Canadian artists and less Canadian content, community radio stations regularly exceed the required 35% Canadian content requirements, in many cases exceeding 50%.

Most emerging Canadian artists continue to get their first spins almost exclusively on community radio.

More than half of Canadian colleges have closed broadcasting and journalism programs in the last few years, community radio is increasingly the **only training ground for future Canadian broadcasters.**

They remain **vital** to ensuring that Canadians from **minority communities** hear their voices on air.

These stations are critical in offering advertising opportunities, event awareness and support for small businesses, community groups, government at all levels; and the people in the communities they serve.

Community, Indigenous, and campus stations are, in many cases, the **only way** that this information is shared at a reasonable cost.



Community, Indigenous, and campus radio stations are at the heart of their communities.

Our emergency response system needs to be better, neighbours need to be connected, local news needs to thrive.



All with the interest of preserving our democracy, which - as we see south of the border, is far from a sure thing.

Current Funding Model

The Canadian government provides important support for many parts of Canadian broadcasting, but has **always left out** community and Indigenous broadcasters.

CBC receives more than \$1.5 billion, including an additional \$150,000,000 in the recent budget.

Commercial broadcasters benefit from national and government advertising while receiving significant tax credits that community stations are ineligible for.



FACTOR and Musicaction do exceptional work.

To promote their emerging artists, they rely heavily on community, Indigenous, and campus stations for their first, second, and third spins.

Annually, they receive more than **\$16 million** from CCD (Canadian Content Development - mandated funding from commercial broadcasters) and related government top-ups, while community radio stations receive diminishing returns of only \$2.8 million, as commercial broadcasters' revenue declines.



They also benefit from the government funded Canada Music Fund.

The Community Radio Initiative will allocate some funds to support the unfunded pillar of Canadian broadcasting.

It should also be noted that only community and campus stations are eligible for CCD funding, while Indigenous stations **have been excluded.**

This proposal will go a long way in **correcting that systemic racism.**

In the early stages of the CRTC's Indigenous broadcasting review, a "*What we Heard*" report was completed. It was clear that the top priority for Indigenous radio stations is also operational support.



Everyone plays a role in the broadcasting system, now we need to ensure all parts of the system are supported in order to best serve Canadians, and to ensure they continue to benefit from local broadcasters.

Community Radio Initiative (CRI)

The CRI is a proposal with a total cost of **\$30 Million dollars** a year indexed to inflation.

The funds will support **three key goals** including:

- Stable funding for all community, Indigenous and campus stations,
- Support for sectoral data collection,
- Special project funding.

Stable Funding

Of the total, **\$24 million** would be allocated to funding HR costs for running a station.

With stable and consistent funding that can be directed towards staffing and skills development, community broadcasters will be able to have an even more significant impact on Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

It will allow them to plan for the future with some consistency, reinvest community fundraising efforts in programming, and it will ensure that staff can be paid a living wage.



This would work out to approximately \$95,000 for every community, Indigenous, and campus licensed station in Canada who are in good standing with the CRTC and who meet the base criteria of good governance.

The average station operates on an annual budget of anywhere from \$5,000 to \$500,000 with an average of \$150,000. It would particularly impact the stations with lesser income, but would still provide important support for the most affluent.

The vast majority of the costs of running a station are related to staffing - and our business is all about people.

Sectoral Data Collection

The CRI will allow for the collection of national data on program type, listeners on both AM-FM and digital platforms, language, spoken word, minority broadcasters and other elements as mandated by the broadcasting act.

Currently, audience measurement tools are prohibitively expensive for many of our stations.

An allocation of **\$700, 000** annually, included in the CRI, would allow us to provide audience measurement tools for all stations.



These tools would provide data that will assist these stations in making convincing arguments to advertisers and enable them to make programming decisions based on facts.

The data will also be aggregated by the CRFC allowing us to produce an annual report on the state of community radio in Canada and to supply this information to the CRTC, government, foundations and other stakeholders with the intention of allowing decision makers to do so with viable and quantifiable data.

This data would allow stations to be more self-sufficient in advertising and funding requests.

Special Projects

In the coming years, the commercial broadcasters CCD fund contributions we have available for special project funding will diminish to the point where it is no longer available, as it is tied to the sale of commercial radio stations, which is on a **dramatic decline**.



The proposal for the CRI includes **\$1.5 million** to ensure stations continue to have access to already oversubscribed funding for training, programming, and special projects.

Finally it will allow for the ongoing promotion of special projects and training, which is increasingly critical for all broadcasters.

Programming cost:	\$24,225,000
Promotion, audience measurement, verification:	\$1,500,000
Special Projects:	\$3,275,000
Administration:	\$1,000,000 (3.3%)
Total:	\$30,000,000

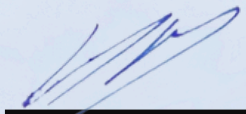
Thank for you consideration. If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to reach out to Alex Freedman.

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