



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada

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Public Lending Right (PLR) Program

Why does Canada have a PLR program?

Each year millions of Canadians access books from their public libraries, free of charge. This free use we enjoy means that authors potentially lose revenues from sales of their books; readers who might otherwise buy a book can instead consult or borrow it from the library.

The Canada Council's PLR Program helps to address this inequity. Each year it distributes payments to authors and other creators to compensate them for the presence of their works in public libraries. The program has steadily evolved since its establishment in 1986 and now includes print books, electronic books, and audiobooks. This year, \$14.8 million will be distributed to more than 18,000 registered individuals.

How does the PLR Program work?

Writers, translators, illustrators, photographers and narrators who are Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada can register their works as explained in our Program guidelines on the following page. Works (print, e-books and audiobooks) of fiction, poetry, drama, children's literature, general non-fiction and scholarly books are eligible. Ineligible categories include how-to books, guidebooks, bibliographies, compilations and textbooks.

How are PLR payments calculated?

PLR payments are determined based on how often a title shows up in an annual survey of select public library system catalogues across Canada. Other factors include the year a title is registered with the Program and the percentage of a title's content claimed by the Program registrant (i.e. co-author or sole author). The following payment scale is used to calculate the payments:

- maximum hit rate for titles registered in the last 5 years;
- 80% for those registered between 6-10 years;
- 70% for those registered 11-15 years; and
- 60% for those registered 16 -25 years.

There is a \$50 threshold set for a PLR payment. This means that only those registrants whose library survey results amount to at least \$50 qualify to receive a PLR payment. Each year, the PLR's budget determines the value of the hit rate and the maximum amount an author may receive.

How is the PLR Program administered?

The PLR Program is administered by the Canada Council for the Arts and is advised by the PLR Commission, which is made up of writers, translators, librarians and publishers. The Commission also includes non-voting representatives from the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Canada Council for the Arts, Library and Archives Canada, and Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec. The professional expertise of the PLR Commission serves to provide oversight and guidance to the criteria and operations of the PLR Program.

The PLR Commission operates under the Canada Council for the Arts. Funding for the PLR Program comes from the federal government through the Canada Council for the Arts.

How can I register with the PLR Program?

REGISTRATION PERIOD: 15 February to 1 May

Registrations are accepted only during the annual registration period (with date of postmark as proof).

Registration forms are available on the PLR website or by contacting the PLR office during the registration period.

Authors must complete the registration form and send it by mail to the PLR office together with the required support material.

PLR Program Eligibility Criteria

Consult the eligibility criteria below to make sure that you and your titles are eligible.

Note: To register an audiobook, you must use the Audiobook Registration form available online.

Important: No claim may be made on behalf of a deceased author by the estate or survivors. Moreover, the shares of ineligible or deceased contributors do not accrue to other contributors.

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Eligible Creators

- Writer
- Translator
- Illustrator or photographer
- Narrator
- Editor (note: only editors with original written contributions qualify)

You are a Canadian citizen (living in Canada or abroad) or have Permanent Resident status, as defined by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

Your book has been published in the last 5 years.

There can be no more than six contributors to the book (this excludes editors and translators, but includes illustrators, photographers and narrators).

Your name appears on a given work's title page or copyright page or, for an anthology contributor, in the table of contents.

Your contribution to the book comprises at least 10% of the length of the book.

Eligible Books

Eligible genres include works of poetry, fiction, drama, children's literature, nonfiction or scholarly works;

Your title must be a book (print or e-book) or an audiobook and have a valid ISBN.

Your book must be at least 48 pages long (24 for a children's book). For e-books, the page count is based on the PDF version.

How to Calculate Your Percentage Share

For print and e-books, your percentage share claim is based on your specific printed contribution to the book. For example, if a 100-page book consists of 70 pages of a writer's work and 30 pages of an illustrator's work, the writer would claim 70% and the illustrator would claim 30%.

Authors and co-authors

- If you are the sole creator of a book, you may claim the whole PLR payment. If your book is an adaptation, you may claim 50%.
- If your book has been translated, or is available in audio format, you may claim up to 50% for each translated or narrated version. In the case of a translated audiobook, you may claim 33%.
- If you are a co-author, calculate your share according to the size of your contribution.

Translators

- The translator of an eligible book may claim up to 50% of the potential PLR payment.
- For translated children's picture books, the eligible author, translator and illustrator may claim 33% each.
- For translated audiobooks, you may claim 33%.
- If more than one translator is involved, the translator percentage claim must be shared accordingly.

Illustrators or photographers

- You may claim a percentage of the PLR payment. The percentage will depend on the space your photos or illustrations take up in the book.
- For children's picture books (24-32 pages), you may claim 50% of the payment (33% if a translator also worked on the project).

Narrators

- The narrator of an eligible audiobook may claim up to 50% of the potential PLR payment.
- For translated audiobooks, you may claim 33%.
- If more than one narrator is involved, the narrator percentage claim must be shared accordingly.

Editors with original written material

- You must have contributed original written work which amounts to at least 10% of the book's text. This can be a preface, an afterword, notes on the text or another written contribution in the body of the book. The work must be identified as yours in the table of contents. Notes on the contributors, indices, timelines, glossaries, bibliographies or tables of contents do not count.
- Your name must be on the title page or copyright page.
- You must be credited as the sole editor or one of multiple co-editors.

Ineligible Genres

- a practical book giving advice or instructions, a self-help or "how-to" book, a manual or guidebook on any subject (e.g. travel, nature, cookbook, etc.);
- a professional guide (legal, technical, medical, scientific, pedagogical, accounting, financial, etc.);
- a book designed primarily for an educational market;
- a list of any kind or short segments of information brought together in a list format (directory, index, compilation, bibliography, dictionary, atlas, encyclopedia, genealogy, etc.);
- a book resulting from a conference, seminar or symposium;
- the catalogue of an exhibition;
- a newspaper, magazine or periodical;
- an unpublished work (e.g. thesis, manuscript);
- DVD or podcast;
- as a new title: a second or subsequent edition of an eligible book, unless at least 50% of this edition constitutes completely new text, not revised text;
- a report, survey or program evaluation;
- a title prepared for or published by a governmental or paragonovernmental organization, institution or corporation;
- wholly or mainly a musical score;
- a calendar, agenda, colouring book, quiz book or game;
- a book created for your employer in the course of your employment;
- A digital bundle or compilation of individual books.

The PLR Program staff reserve the right to re-examine the eligibility of a registered title at any time.

The results of registrations received during the registration period are mailed to authors in February of the following year.