



CULTURAL INDUSTRIES ONTARIO NORTH

CULTURAL INDUSTRIES ONTARIO NORTH (CION) is dedicated to fostering the regional music and audiovisual industries, with commitment to delivering educational and promotional programs that cultivate the advancement of homegrown talent and technicians within Northern Ontario's star-studded boundaries. From major city centres to rural communities, CION staff empower artists both burgeoning and accomplished by curating resources, networks, and experiences that advance artistic endeavours on home soil and abroad.

CION's ongoing advocacy for Northern Ontario music and film production is carried out with the primary objective of attracting investment in film and television industry projects and creating new revenue opportunities for Northern Ontario communities, artists and production professionals.

THE NORTHERN ONTARIO MUSIC AND FILM AWARDS (NOMFA) represent the culmination of CION's historic investments toward the development of a thriving cultural industry seen across our region – and the talented artists that make it so. This marquee event occurs every two (2) years and brings the broader, national arts community to Greater Sudbury for a multi-day Conference and non-stop celebration.

THE AWARDS - WHY SHOULD YOU ENTER?

MUSICIANS AND FILMMAKERS WHO ARE FROM – OR HAVE RECENTLY WORKED – IN NORTHERN ONTARIO can apply for award consideration in up to fourteen (14) categories that celebrate outstanding achievements from recent music and film projects with roots in the North. Head to page three (3) for more information on each award category and their respective criteria.

Artists deserve recognition for the hard work they put into the music and films they create. Why not celebrate your hard work with the peers of your industry and region? Nominees will receive passes, providing opportunities to network and make contacts within the music and film communities. Several nominees will have their work showcased (live music showcases & film screenings), have opportunities to engage in intensive industry skill development workshops, and/or meet someone who will help you take your career to the next level.

NOMFA NOMINEES RECEIVE A FULL CONFERENCE PASS - and might access travel support if a trek is necessary – to help them catch all NOMFA 2026 activities like live music showcases, short film screenings, professional development sessions, industry mixers, meet-and-greets, and the star of the show: the official Award Ceremony.

DON'T WAIT FOR ANOTHER TWO YEARS TO PASS. Immerse in the magnificence of Northern Ontario's arts & culture and surround yourself with the best-of-the-best. NOMFA 2026 invites all artists to celebrate Northern excellence together in Greater Sudbury, Ontario.



NOMFA – WHY SHOULD YOU ATTEND?

Artists without submitted or nominated projects can still benefit greatly from attending the various NOMFA showcases, workshops and panel sessions. In addition to the many opportunities available, personal participation and attendance adds to the development, growth and vitality of music and film in the North. NOMFA is an opportunity to not only celebrate recent accomplishments but also promote to the wider world the wealth of talent and culture to be found in Northern Ontario.

ENTRY DEADLINES

All entries must be received by 5 p.m. (ET) on January 16, 2026.

CONTACT

For any questions or for more information, contact CION at info@cionorth.ca or 705-885-9889, or visit the website at cionorth.ca/nomfa.

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

The entrant must be one of the following:

1. A person who has lived in Northern Ontario for the consecutive twenty-four (24) month period between January 1, 2024, and December 31, 2025.
2. A person who was a resident of Northern Ontario for a period of at least ten (10) consecutive years.

For bands or collaborations, at least 50% of the individuals must meet the above residency requirements, unless the category they are entering indicates otherwise. Actors in the Outstanding Actor – Feature Length category are exempt from residency requirements.

Northern Ontario, as defined for the purposes of the Awards Program, comprises the territorial districts of Algoma, Cochrane, Kenora, Manitoulin, Nipissing, Parry Sound, Rainy River, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Temiskaming and the District Municipality of Muskoka.



MUSIC AWARD CATEGORIES

OUTSTANDING ALBUM

Submissions will be assessed on the following criteria: quality of music, lyrical content (if applicable), vocal performance, musicianship, originality, production, strength of the overall project, and arrangements. This award is presented to the solo artist/duo/group. A minimum of 50% of a duo or group must meet the residency requirements in order to qualify.

OUTSTANDING FRENCH LANGUAGE ARTIST OR GROUP

Submissions will be assessed on the following criteria: quality of music, lyrical content (if applicable), vocal performance, musicianship, originality, production, strength of the overall project, and arrangements. This award is presented to the solo artist/duo/group. A minimum of 50% of a duo or group must meet the residency requirements in order to qualify.

OUTSTANDING INDIGENOUS ARTIST OR GROUP

Submissions will be assessed on the following criteria: quality of music, lyrical content (if applicable), vocal performance, musicianship, originality, production, strength of the overall project, and arrangements. This award is presented to the solo artist/duo/group. A minimum of 50% of a duo or group must meet the residency requirements in order to qualify.

OUTSTANDING ENGINEER

Submissions will be assessed on the following criteria: quality of production, sonic impact, psychoacoustics, and good use of creative and technical audio attributes. This award recognizes excellence in the field of



audio engineering for studio recordings. The award goes to the individual engineer. The individual engineer must meet residency requirements, but the artist does not. Submissions must include a total of three (3) song selections drawn from ONE (1) project completed during the Eligibility Period.

OUTSTANDING SONGWRITER

Submissions will be assessed on the following criteria: song structure, melody, quality of the music, lyrical content, originality, and overall impression. The song submitted must have been released on record during the Eligibility Period. Single releases, or single tracks from multi-track/multi-artist compilations of new material are eligible. This award will only honour the Northern Ontario songwriter(s) and collaborator(s) who meet the residency requirements.

OUTSTANDING VOCAL PERFORMANCE

Submissions will be assessed on the following criteria: pitch (intonation), clarity (heard/understood), tone, dynamics, lead vocal quality, performance/delivery of lead vocal, and overall impression. This award is for vocal performance only. The submitted song must have been released on record during the Eligibility Period. Single releases, or single tracks from multi-track/multi-artist compilations of new material are eligible. This award will only honour the Northern Ontario vocalist(s) and collaborator(s) who meet the residency requirements.

OUTSTANDING MUSIC VIDEO

Submissions will be assessed on the following criteria: overall concept, technical execution, originality and suitability for the music. The video submitted must have been released on a recognized 3rd party platform (Vimeo, YouTube, etc.) or have been broadcast on television during the Eligibility Period. A minimum of 50% of a duo or group must meet the residency requirements in order to qualify. The director of the video does not need to meet the residency requirements. This award will be presented to the musical act.

FILM/TV AWARD CATEGORIES

OUTSTANDING FEATURE FILM

Submissions will be assessed based on the following criteria: emotional conveyance, characters and casting, screenplay, cinematography, editing, directing, overall story and impression. Submissions to this category must be over 65 minutes in duration. All genres of film (documentary, animated or live action) are accepted. At least 50% of the film must have been shot in Northern Ontario to be eligible for consideration, and the film must have screened to a public audience during the Eligibility Period.

OUTSTANDING TELEVISION SERIES

Submissions will be assessed based on the following criteria: emotional conveyance, characters and casting, screenplay, cinematography, editing, directing, overall story and impression. Submissions to this category must be for a series with a minimum of 3 broadcast episodes of at least 11 minutes in duration, each having been broadcast on a recognized television channel or streaming service during the Eligibility Period. All genres of television (drama, comedy, animation, horror, etc.) are accepted. At least 50% of the series must have been shot in Northern Ontario.

OUTSTANDING DIRECTOR – FEATURE LENGTH

Submissions will be assessed based on the following criteria: emotional conveyance, characters and casting, screenplay, cinematography, editing, directing, overall story and impression. Submissions to this



category must be at least 65 minutes in duration and may fit any one of the following genres: drama, comedy, experimental, animation, sci-fi, horror or documentary. All long-form films must have been screened to a public audience during the Eligibility Period. At least 50% of the film must have been shot in Northern Ontario, and the film's director must meet the residency eligibility requirements.

OUTSTANDING DIRECTOR – SHORT FORMAT

Submissions will be assessed based on the following criteria: emotional conveyance, characters and casting, screenplay, cinematography, editing, directing, overall story and impression. Submissions to this category must be 1 to 30 minutes in duration and may fit any one of the following genres: drama, comedy, experimental, animation, sci-fi, horror or documentary. All short films must have been screened to a public audience during the Eligibility Period. The film must have been shot in Northern Ontario, and the film's director must meet the residency eligibility requirements.

OUTSTANDING SCREENWRITER

Submissions will be assessed on the following criteria: plot, dialogue, pacing and rhythm, format and structure, overall story and impression, emotional conveyance and character development. The screenplay must have been completed during the Eligibility Period. Screenplays must be complete and conform to industry standard. The award will only honour the screenwriter(s) and collaborator(s) who meet the Northern Ontario residency requirements.

OUTSTANDING ACTOR – FEATURE LENGTH

Submissions will be assessed on the following criteria: character development, physicality, character interaction with other cast members, suitability for the role and overall impression. All lengths, categories and genres of film are eligible. At least 50% of the film must have been shot in Northern Ontario. The award goes to the individual.

OUTSTANDING ACTOR – SHORT FORMAT

Submissions will be assessed on the following criteria: character development, physicality, character interaction with other cast members, suitability for the role and overall impression. All lengths, categories and genres of film are eligible. At least 50% of the film must have been shot in Northern Ontario. The award goes to the individual actor who meets the Northern Ontario residency requirements.

SUBMISSIONS

All entries must meet eligibility criteria. Late or incomplete entries will not be accepted.

Each eligible entry will be considered for selection as one of the final nominees in each category. The entries will be reviewed by CION to verify completeness and eligibility.

ENTRY FEES

An entry fee of \$15 per category, HST included, must accompany all entries. These fees cover administrative and handling costs for the entries. Multiple entries require a payment for each entry.

All fees are non-refundable, even if the entrant is disqualified or not chosen as a nominee.

JURY SELECTION

The eligible entries of each category will be judged by a panel of jurors who are representative of the diversity of the music, film and television industries. Jurors will be selected for their demonstrated expertise



and knowledge of the industry and of the categories being judged. Jurors who are deemed by CION to have a conflict of interest for any entry will not be involved in the judgment of that entry but will count as one of the members of the jury. No CION board or staff member shall sit as a juror, submit or be submitted for an award, or affect the decision making of the juries. Jurors are not permitted to submit entries to the awards or to have submissions made on their behalf. The names of jurors will be kept confidential until published in the NOMFA event listings. Jurors' decisions will be based on criteria specific to each category in terms of originality, form, content, and technical execution. Decisions of the jury are final and are not open to appeal. All nominees will be contacted by mail, phone or e-mail during the month of February 2026. Nominee information will be posted on the CION website and announced to the public by means of a media release. The winners in each category will be announced at the awards ceremony to be held in Sudbury in May of 2026.

ELIGIBILITY PERIOD

MUSIC: Unless otherwise stated in the category description, all music category entries must have been released to commercial radio and/or retail during the period from January 1, 2024, and December 31, 2025, inclusively (the "Eligibility Period"). Retail includes anywhere music is available for sale, i.e. live performances, mail order, retail stores, online, etc. Entries must include proof of the date of release, which may be in the form of a letter from a record company or distributor, press releases, reviews, proof of online distribution, proof of delivery to radio or retail, etc.

FILM/TV: All projects in each category submitted **must** have been premiered or screened to a public audience (minimum of 1 screening) or on a recognized broadcaster during the period from January 1, 2024, and December 31, 2025, inclusively (the "Eligibility Period"). Each submission must be accompanied by a letter from a programmer/representative of a recognized festival or event, or from a recognized exhibitor or broadcaster confirming the date(s) and location(s) of the screening.

FORMATS

MUSIC: Only full-length sound recordings will be considered for the Outstanding Album categories (see individual categories for specific stipulations). A full-length sound recording is defined as a recording that contains a minimum of five (5) tracks, or, alternatively, is a minimum of thirty (30) minutes long. All full-length recordings require 80% original content by the artist or group entrant. However, in genres that rely heavily on repertoire (for example: Jazz, Blues, Roots & Traditional, Classical), an exception may be made on a case-by-case basis. Any entries of single tracks or individual compilation tracks must be original by the artist or group as applicable.

FILM/TV: All lengths, categories and genres of film/TV will be accepted, unless otherwise indicated in the specific award category. Short, feature length and individual episodic screenplays will be accepted for the Outstanding Screenwriter category. Screenplays must be complete and formatted to industry standards in order to be eligible.

CONDUCT

CION is committed to upholding a positive environment at NOMFA, in which nominees, showcasing artists, sponsors and guests may attend the event in a professional manner, reflecting constructive relationships, equality and inclusion, and mutual respect. CION has zero tolerance for discrimination or harassment, as well as illegal, dishonest or unethical conduct. CION will not tolerate, condone, or ignore unethical conduct and is committed to enforcing these standards at all levels.



Nominees and guests are expected refrain from committing any act that will degrade themselves or damage the standing, reputation, welfare and/or outstanding interests of CION. Violations of Conduct include but are not limited to the following:

- Threatening, harassing or abusing others, either verbally, physically or in writing (including by email, text messages, and/or social media), whether sexual or non-sexual. Without limitation, this includes fighting, horseplay, threatening remarks or gestures, foul/offensive language, obscene gestures, sexual advances or requests for sexual favors, or engaging in other behavior detrimental to others.
- Exhibiting behavior that (i) is unruly, disruptive, lewd, or illegal in nature; or (ii) that endangers the health or safety of others, including behavior caused by intoxication or other impairment related to substance abuse.
- Taking photographs or recordings during panels or presentations where prohibited.
- Failing to follow the directions of event personnel or CION staff regarding event operations or emergency response procedures.
- Any other action or activity which could reasonably be construed as contrary or detrimental to the outstanding interests of CION.

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

MUSIC: Music recordings must fulfill all applicable legal obligations (i.e. licences and copyright, songwriters properly credited, mechanical licences have been paid, etc.).

FILM/TV: Film and TV productions must fulfill all applicable legal obligations (i.e. licences and copyright, writers properly credited, etc.).

AUTHORIZATION – WHO CAN SIGN?

Persons signing the authorization form must own or have licences to all copyright for the material submitted or be authorized in writing by the owner to submit and have the authority to execute said authorization.

LANGUAGE QUALIFICATIONS

All languages are accepted, unless otherwise stated in the category description. However, if submitted in a language other than English in any category but Outstanding Francophone Album, the inclusion of lyrics, subtitles or transcripts in English or French are required.

SUBMISSION RESTRICTIONS

More than one project can be submitted to a single category, or a single project can be submitted to more than one category, so long as each project meets the eligibility criteria for that category.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- All materials submitted become the property of CION and may be used for the promotion of the Northern Ontario Music and Film Awards Program in any media throughout the world.
- Artists retain copyright for all aspects of their work.
- Proof of residency may be requested.
- The Cultural Industries Ontario North Board of Directors, and Cultural Industries Ontario North Staff, together with its Jurors will endeavour to carry out the Northern Ontario Music and Film Awards



Program in the manner stated, but shall not be responsible for any irregularities in carrying out the said program or any losses or damages suffered by anyone as a result of their endeavour to carry out the said program in the manner stated or any variation thereof.

- Although the Management and Staff of Cultural Industries Ontario North will endeavour to maintain the program as herein set out, they reserve the right to vary the program as they deem appropriate in their opinion.
- **Rules and regulations are deemed to be accepted by the participating party upon entering this contest.**

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FACTOR
THE FOUNDATION ASSISTING CANADIAN TALENT ON RECORDINGS
WITH SUPPORT FROM CANADIAN PRIVATE RADIO BROADCASTERS



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