



2024 General Grant Guidelines

The Berkeley FILM Foundation (BFF) is pleased to open applications for our 2024 grant program. Once you have read through the grant guidelines and find you are a qualified candidate, we invite you to submit an application through Submittable which will be active on our website starting Monday April 2 at 8:00am.

The deadline to apply for a **General Grant is Monday May 13, 2024 at 5:00pm PST.**

Applications for a **Student Grant are due Monday, June 3, 2024 by 5:00pm PST** to accommodate for graduation ceremonies.

If you are unable to submit a written application, please contact Isabella Miller at isabella@berkeleyfilmfoundation.org or at 510-705-1481 to discuss accommodations and alternate methods to apply.

PLEASE READ: CHANGE IN ELIGIBILITY

Narrative/fiction short film projects (animation or live action) will not be accepted in this cycle. Instead, a separate grant cycle will be opening later this summer for Narrative films only. As a review committee, we found that reviewing Narrative shorts alongside documentary shorts and features was too complex a process and we have decided to create a separate program from documentary consideration. More information will be released later this year on the new program.

Program Description

The Berkeley FILM Foundation supports East-Bay based emerging and established independent filmmakers whose work combines intellectual clarity with creative use of the medium. We support documentary works that have a social consciousness and addresses complex issues of our time. **BFF follows many aspects of IDA's Core Application.** A new version was released in the fall of 2022 and is incorporated into BFF's 2024 application. However, it is not identical to the Core, so please be sure to read the questions carefully and complete the answers to the best of your ability.

What Do We Fund

Berkeley FILM Foundation provides grants in the **production, post-production and distribution** stages of the film project. We do not fund projects in the pre-production or development phase. Applicants may submit one project for consideration per funding cycle.

The Berkeley FILM Foundation is interested in films that have a social consciousness and shine a light on untold stories of oppression or historical mistreatment, stories celebrating underrepresented communities, films about environmental degradation or climate change, educational films about little-known science, health, local history or profile films of an individual who is challenging norms or fighting the status quo. We value films of varying styles and types, from verité to direct cinema.

We judge films based on originality and creativity. Does the film tell a new story or contain a unique angle on an old premise? Is the filmmaker telling the story with imagination and using new techniques?

The subject of the film is also taken into consideration. Does this story need to be told? Is this a film that will gain a wide audience both within and outside of serious film viewers? Does the filmmaking team display a level of professionalism that will enable the film to be completed?

We also consider the issue of authorship: Why is this person telling this story? Is this the right person to be telling this story? These are some examples of things that the team could address in the application.

The Grants

BFF has three tiers of grants available to filmmakers: special awards (listed below), regular grants and student grants. The number of regular grants and student grants distributed can change each year depending on our available funds. In the past few cycles, we have been able to fund 20-25 films per year.

Regular grants awarded will usually range between \$2,500 - \$15,000, and student grants are typically \$5,000, however sometimes they are split between two projects. The amount of the award will be determined by several aspects of the application including (but not limited to) the line items outlined in the project budget, the intended use of the grant, the stage of the project you are in and the team behind the project. If you receive less money than you asked for, it is usually because we have run low on allocated funds but want to support the project for its creativity or cultural or social relevancy and BFF's small grant will help inspire other organizations to give larger amounts.

The Saul Zaentz Award: \$25,000

This has historically been the Berkeley FILM Foundation's highest award given each year and is our most prestigious. During final deliberation, the review committee chooses the "best film" of the final round or the film that we mutually agree deserves the top prize. There are usually several great films to choose from. The idea is whatever film is chosen, it will best embody the mission and purpose of the organization and its commitment to social justice.

The Al Bendich Award: \$20,000

This award is in honor of renowned civil rights attorney Al Bendich. Mr. Bendich was on the counsel team of the ACLU and defended poet Allen Ginsberg and comedian Lenny Bruce against obscenity charges. He then served later as counsel for Saul Zaentz. Therefore, this award is saved specifically for a film that addresses urgent issues of civil rights or freedom of speech.

NEW The Saul Zaentz Award for Underserved Communities: \$25,000

This award is in honor of Saul Zaentz's lifetime commitment to uncovering the root causes of poverty which results in people's limited access to quality education, food or housing. The film we choose for this award will address systemic issues that lead to vulnerable communities.

The Jonathan Logan Elevate Award: \$25,000

This award was first granted to BFF in 2020 from the Jonathan Logan Family Foundation. As stipulated by JLFF, it is given specifically to a young filmmaker of color whose work displays a passion for complex social or political issues. The 2020 award was given to Alex Bledsoe, a young black woman whose film OAKLEAD is a shocking expose on the crisis of lead poisoning in the Oakland water supply.

** Recipients of all four of these awards are determined by the grants review panel during their final deliberation. You may not apply for them specifically.*

Eligibility

The Berkeley FILM Foundation only funds filmmakers who work or live in the cities of Berkeley, Emeryville, Albany, El Cerrito, Richmond or Oakland. They must provide a physical address in one of these cities in the application – a P.O. Box unfortunately doesn't count. The applicant must be the primary creator of the work as in the Director or Producer, i.e., the editor cannot apply for a grant. Additionally, the Applicant must be:

- At least 18 years of age.
- Residing or working in a qualified city for at least one year prior to the application deadline.

As stated above in the introduction, **Narrative/fiction short film projects (animation or live action) will not be accepted in this cycle. Instead, a separate grant cycle will be opening later this summer for Narrative films only.**

If you are a previous grant award winner, you may not reapply with the same project in consecutive years. In a non-consecutive year, if you are reapplying for the same project, it should be for funding in another category (i.e. if you received production or post production funding, you may reapply for outreach and community engagement funding. For ITVS funded films, we can only accept applications for distribution. However, BFF will consider projects that have received an ITVS Diversity Development Grant.)

Finally, BFF will not consider a new film proposal from a former grant recipient until the prior funded film is completed.

Eligible Genre in April 2024:

- Short Documentary (40 minutes or less)
- Long Documentary (over 40 minutes)

Not Eligible:

- Broadcast news journalism
- Broadcast reality entertainment
- Advertising Commercials
- Industrial or Corporate Media
- Music Videos

We Do Not Fund:

- Retroactive costs
- Media projects other than film or video.
- Organizational projects for internal or promotional use.
- General operating expenses of companies or organizations.

The Application

The application must be submitted via Submittable using the link on the ‘Apply’ page on our website, www.berkeleyfilmfoundation.org that will be live on Monday April 10, 2023.

In addition to the various questions asked on the form, applicants will be required to include the following materials:

1. **Current resume:** Please include a current resume for the director and producer of professional activities and achievements within the application. Other key personnel on the project may be listed on the resume as well.

2. **Project Budget:** You must provide your full project budget for consideration as part of the application as an excel document including line items. Please ensure this document is concise and easy to read. If applying for a distribution grant, please provide a detailed distribution budget and the total production cost. We encourage applicants list intended pay to collaborators at a fair market rate. To learn about non-fiction hiring trends by visiting: <https://www.paytransparencyproject.org/>. **PLEASE make sure the document is formatted correctly and blank cells/rows do not bleed onto additional blank pages. This is a bigger problem every year!**

3. **Film Sample:** You must provide a maximum of 10-minutes of edited footage as your film sample. You clip should be included as a Vimeo link to your project, or you may upload the file directly to the portal. If a password is needed, please use: **BFF** (all caps).

****Things to keep in mind:**

1. If you are in the later stages of production, i.e. deep post-production or distribution, we highly suggest providing a clip that is between 5-10 minutes in length. This allows the review panel to see the variety of subjects, locations, emotions and themes that you will include in your final project.
2. When describing your film sample in the application, tell us how it is representative of the intended story, style, subject, or other aspect of the project. If your current sample is outside of the suggested length requirements, please provide reviewers with the time codes of the portion of the sample that best reflects your intended style and approach (e.g., 3:15-12:15). Reviewers will not watch outside of these parameters.
3. The sample should demonstrate your access to characters, visual treatment, and the developing tone and style. We encourage applicants to submit a contains a complete scene that provides the viewer insight into the team's ability to communicate their intention.
4. As part of your application, you may now provide links to previous work samples to better understand your creative style and scope of your work. However, it is not required and we cannot guarantee that all panelists will review this work.

Application Review

Grants and awardees are approved by the Berkeley FILM Foundation Board of Directors acting upon the recommendations of the Grant Review Panel. The Grant Review Panel is comprised of eight industry professionals distinguished in their respective artistic fields.

- Official applications and support documents must be received by Monday May 13, 2024 by 5:00pm PST.

- The review process is six to seven weeks in length.
- Applicants notified of award decisions no later than the end of July, 2024.
- Grants are awarded on a competitive basis.

Please Note:

The Berkeley FILM Foundation can only fund a small percentage of the applicants we receive. A rejection does not preclude future applications. If you are awarded a grant, the film must conduct one community screening in partnership with BFF following completion, taking into consideration signed distribution contracts.

For technical assistance, including troubles accessing your account or uploading files, please contact Submittable Support at support@submittable.com

For content assistance please contact the Berkeley Film Foundation at info@berkeleyfilmfoundation.org