

# Screen BC Short Film Award

Guidelines 2025/26



CREATIVE  
BC



BRITISH  
COLUMBIA

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## Screen BC Short Film Award Guidelines 2025/26

The Screen BC Short Film Award will provide one emerging filmmaker with an opportunity to further develop his/her/their directing career by realizing a unique creative vision. This program was established to recognize and celebrate the contribution of film and television to the Province of British Columbia. **Creators of diverse voices and perspectives are encouraged to apply.**

The successful candidate will receive a \$15,000 cash award, plus services “in-kind” valued up to \$100,000 from across the industry, enabling the filmmaker to complete his/her/their project with the guidance of experienced industry professionals and support services provided by top supply houses in British Columbia.

Screen BC will assist the winning team to solicit and coordinate substantial donations of “in-kind” services from the membership of Screen BC including production and post production services, equipment and supplies.

*The Screen BC Short Film Award was founded in the spirit of collaboration, inclusion and equitable access to emerging filmmaker opportunities. In this spirit, the Award proponents and the industry community that supports it are committed to fostering safe environments free of discrimination and harassment, where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity, and can contribute fully to the creative process without hindrance.*

**Please Note:** This award is not intended for established film industry professionals.

**Eligible Project Types:** Live action dramas, no more than 10 minutes in length.

**Award Amount:** \$15,000 cash award and in-kind services valued up to \$100,000.

**Decision Process:** Competitive, informed by an advisory panel.

**Deadline to Apply:** September 15, 2025 at 4:00pm PT.

## Applicant Eligibility

Individuals applying must be the Director of the proposed project. The Director must:

- Be 19 years of age or older;
- Be a Canadian citizen or Permanent Resident;
- Currently reside in the province of British Columbia and have lived in British Columbia for a minimum of 12 months prior to submitting the application to Creative BC;
- Have creative control and final editorial authority over the proposed project;
- At minimum, be either a graduate from a post-secondary institution or recognized film school, or possess equivalent experience in the film industry and, through their body of work, be able to demonstrate ability and talent;
- Have directed and completed at least two short films or television projects that demonstrate the expertise and imagination required to meet the challenges of creating an original and visionary short film (student films do count);
- Not have directed more than 60 minutes of professional live action, documentary, dramatic or comedic films (student films credits will not count towards this – all other directing credits, including productions currently in development, will);

- Agree to grant Screen BC and Creative BC the right to stream, screen and exploit the completed film (non-commercial use/promotional purposes only);
- Agree that the world premiere screening of the completed short will occur in 2026;
- Previous recipients of the Screen BC (fka MPPIA) Short Film Award are not eligible to apply for this award again.
- One Director per application, one application per Director. Co-Director projects will not be accepted under any circumstances;

For the purposes of this program, a professional credit means a writer, director or producer credit on a longer form released project that:

- Was completed outside of film school or an industry training opportunity; or
- Was financed using mainstream funding sources (such as Telefilm Canada, the Canada Media Fund, broadcaster or online subscription services licensing etc.); and
- Subsequently either played on a broadcaster or online subscription service, was released theatrically, or toured extensively through major film festivals.

Short films (under a broadcast ½ hour), web series and projects that were primarily self-financed (credit, loans, crowdfunding sources etc.) do not need to be counted as a professional credit.

#### **The Producer attached to the project must:**

- NOT be the applicant Director of the project;
- Must have produced and completed at least two film or television projects that demonstrate the expertise required to meet the challenges of producing an original and visionary short film (student films do count);
- Must have experience with Movie Magic scheduling software or something comparable; and
- Must have knowledge or access to professionals in business affairs, rights acquisition, contracts and accounting.

### **Project Eligibility**

Eligible projects must:

- Showcase British Columbia talent in front of and behind the camera (Screen BC and Creative BC funds may not be used towards procuring foreign talent);
- Have a finished running time of not more than 10 minutes in length;
- Be based on an original work;
- Be live action drama or docudrama (animation or documentary scripts will not be accepted);
- Be completed within 11 months of the “Award Date”;
- Be mastered and delivered in HD.

Upon completion a digital link is to be provided to: Screen BC and Creative BC.

Preference will be given to a project which, in the opinion of the selection committee members, is realizable, innovative, inspirational and visionary, and showcases British Columbian talent in front of and behind the camera.

### **Financial Participation and In-Kind Services**

The Recipient of this award will receive the following contributions:

Partner	Financial Participation
Screen BC	\$10,000
Creative BC	\$5,000
Screen BC Members	In-Kind Donations (Information Below)

### CONTRIBUTED SERVICES IN KIND

The in-kind donation of services by Screen BC members will have a value of up to \$100,000. Possible support available will include pre-production (e.g. office space, accounting and mentorship), production (e.g. lights, cameras, offices, materials, video stock and stage space) and post production (e.g. editing, transfers, dubbing and VFX).

The Screen BC Short Film Award Board will work closely with the selected finalist to confirm the actual services to be provided, in-kind, from the available donors. Finalists should be aware of an over reliance or expectation of in-kind support. Relying on any one supplier is problematic and discouraged.

All in-kind support is subject to availability at the time of production and therefore cannot be guaranteed. Planning the production period to occur off-season, when resources are more likely to be available, is advised.

### APPLICATION PROCEDURES:

Applicants will be asked to complete an online application form that includes:

- Basic information on your project and team;
- Budget top sheet;
- A Creative Package (max 10 pages), including director’s vision, detailed story synopsis/arc, and character / subject profiles;
- A full script;
- An audience and marketing plan (max 5 pages);
- A Key Creative Team document providing information on key creative team members (Example: Editor, Director of Photography, Production Designer etc.) and relevant link to a project demo or key creative team members previous work (if applicable);
- A Community Engagement Plan (max 2 pages) and/or Letter of Support for projects that intend to shoot in or collaborate with under-represented communities, especially Indigenous communities. Additional guidance provided on the [Indigenous Screen Office Protocols](#) page;
- Director Statement (max 1000 words or 5 minutes video).

A comprehensive checklist is available on our website to guide you through the application process. This checklist will be used as a reference during the evaluation, so we strongly encourage you to review it to ensure your submission includes all required information.

If there are any changes to the application after submission, applicants may update or revise their information and documentation via email, with a **maximum of one revision allowed prior to the application deadline**.

Each applicant director is limited to submitting one application.

If you require accommodation or additional support in the application process, we are here to help. Please contact the Program Analyst.

## Evaluation Process

Upon submission of your application, applications will be adjudicated in two stages:

### Stage One

An Advisory Panel comprised of individuals active in a professional capacity in the B.C. film, media and television industry, will review all applications received.

The panel will consider the following items when reviewing submissions:

- originality of the concept;
- quality and eloquence of the script;
- experience of the applicant director;
- marketing plan and distribution strategy;
- feasibility of the director's vision statement;
- experience and track record of the producer named in the application;
- letters of recommendation provided in support of the director and producer;
- use of British Columbian talent in front of and behind the camera;
- overall viability of the proposal; and
- sense of style and impact evident from the applicant director's supporting materials/links.

A shortlist of up to five applicants will be selected to move forward to Stage Two.

### Stage Two

The short-listed applicants will be invited to pitch their projects before a panel of three senior industry professionals. The live pitch session will take place on the morning of **Friday, December 5, 2025** at the 2025 Whistler Film Festival.

The winner of this competition will be announced at the 2025 Whistler Film Festival Anniversary Party on the evening of **Friday, December 5, 2025**

The panel will take the following into consideration when reviewing the pitches:

- originality of the concept;
- quality and eloquence of the script;
- experience of the applicant director;
- marketing plan and distribution strategy;
- feasibility of the director's vision statement;
- experience and track record of the producer named in the application;

- letters of recommendation provided in support of the director and producer;
- use of British Columbian talent in front of and behind the camera;
- overall viability of the proposal; and
- sense of style and impact evident from the applicant director's supporting materials/links.

One applicant will be selected to receive the Screen BC Short Film Award, by a unanimous vote of the panel.

## Eligibility Review

An initial review of eligibility and missing documentation will be conducted by Creative BC staff. If documentation is missing, applicants will be informed and given a maximum of 5 business days to submit outstanding documents. Following this, incomplete or ineligible applications will be withdrawn.

## Funding Decisions

All decisions will be confirmed via email. **Please note that all funding decisions are final.**

## Terms of Funding

### Contracting and Drawdowns

The recipient of the award will need to incorporate an eligible B.C. owned and controlled production company to produce the project and prior to any drawdowns being released. The recipient will need to be the majority owner/common voting shareholder of this incorporated company.

Contracts will include a production timeline, payment schedule and specific deliverables, according to the project's specifics. Generally, the payment schedule will be 80% on commencement of principal photography and 20% on final cost report and confirmation of project completion.

Final cost reports will follow industry best practices as established by Telefilm and the Canada Media Fund.

### Respectful Workplace + Client and Partner Code of Conduct

As a catalyst for, and investor in B.C.'s creative industries, Creative BC is committed to supporting a healthy ecosystem that thrives in a culture of mutual respect, dignity and inclusivity that is free from any form of harassment, discrimination, and violence. All companies that work with, or seek funding from, Creative BC are expected to adhere to [Creative BC's Code of Conduct for Clients, Partners, and Stakeholders](#), implement policies and procedures for a harassment-free workplace, and comply with relevant laws. Creative BC is a signatory of the [Creative Industries Code](#) and expects all applicants, recipients, and partners to also adhere to this Code of Conduct. [Learn more.](#)

### Inclusive Leadership for Film and Television Program

Key Creatives of the selected project will be required to participate in the [Inclusive Leadership for Film and Television Workshop](#); a professional development initiative offered in partnership between Creative Pathways™ and Elevate Inclusion Strategies. Further details regarding this requirement will be outlined in the funding agreement.

## On Screen Protocols & Pathways | Indigenous Screen Office

It is a requirement that all filmmakers read and adhere to the guidance provided in [ON SCREEN PROTOCOLS & PATHWAYS](#): A Media Production Guide to Working with First Nations, Métis and Inuit Communities, Cultures, Concepts and Stories.

## Being Seen | Black Screen Office

Creative BC supported the [Black Screen Office's "Being Seen – Directives for creating authentic and inclusive content"](#) study conducted to provide directives to everyone in the film, television and interactive digital media industries to help them commission, create and assess authentic content. We urge applicants to read and utilize this study as a tool to educate themselves, develop strategies for change, and enact real, systemic and long-lasting transformation.

## Reel Green™ at Creative BC

Sustainable production efforts in British Columbia were formalized in 2006 through the [Reel Green™ initiative](#), a resource centre with a collection of best practices to help productions reduce their environmental impacts and improve their overall environmental footprint.

The successful project must adhere to sustainable practices throughout the development process of their project and beyond. We also require successful applicants to take the [Climate and Sustainable Production Training course](#).

In alignment with the Government of Canada's commitment to net-zero emissions by, or before, 2050, successful applicants to this program will also be required to use industry level Carbon Calculators such as the [Green Production Guide Carbon Footprint Calculator](#) and/or the [Albert Carbon Footprint Calculator](#).

## Forfeiture and Default

A completion date is noted on the Agreement by which all deliverables will be submitted. Should all materials not be provided by the completion date, the eligible applicant forfeits any outstanding drawdown amounts, and the commitment will be reduced by this amount.

Should an eligible applicant be placed in default- according to the terms of the Agreement, this limits the applicant, its principals and any parent or subsidiary companies from accessing further funding from Creative BC. In addition, Creative BC reserves the right to request immediate repayment of any funds advanced.

## Appeal Process

Creative BC does not offer any form of appeal process for this program. Eligible applicants are welcome to apply for subsequent funding rounds.

Please note that all funding decisions are final.

## Questions?

Make sure to review the FAQ and Application Checklist on the Creative BC website. If you still have any questions about eligibility, or require additional supports to submit your application, please contact:

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