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**Introduction**

The Washington State Legislature created the Production Incentive Program (also referred to as the Motion Picture Competitiveness Program) in 2006 to attract and retain film industry investment in Washington ([Chapter 43.365. RCW](#)). The legislature passed [ESHB 1914](#) during the 2022 legislative session which allows the Production Incentive Program to allocate up to \$3M annually to support Washington resident filmmakers through the Small Budget Production Initiative (SBPI).

[Washington Filmworks](#) (WF) is the private non-profit organization that manages the Production Incentive Program as well as a variety of resources for the creative industries in Washington State. WF's mission is to create economic development opportunities by building and enhancing the competitiveness, profile and sustainability of Washington State's film industry.

**What Is Available in the Small Budget Production Initiative?**

The SBPI is designed to better support emerging Washington State filmmakers by offering funding assistance for projects with budgets between \$20,000 - \$1M. Under the SBPI, most types of motion picture content is eligible for consideration which includes but is not limited to feature films, episodics, commercials, documentary projects, animation projects, and XR projects. 85% of the production's principal photography days must be filmed in Washington State. Of the applications received, the Board of Directors will fund no more than 5 short films with a running time of 40 minutes or less<sup>1</sup> annually.

A motion picture project with a budget between \$20,000 - \$1M, that has a minimum of 2 Washington residents in the positions of director, producer, screenwriter or lead actor, may apply for the program. The applicant of record for the motion picture must be a Washington resident producer or director. If an applicant's project is fully funded and there is money available in the SBPI fund, they may apply at any time during the calendar year. Applicants with projects that are not fully funded may qualify for an early phase funding commitment. Intended to help facilitate additional fundraising for the project, SBPI dollars may be 'first money in' (i.e., the project does not need to be fully funded or have raised any money for the project at the time of application.) If approved for the program, the funding assistance can be held in reserve for up to 6 months.

WF offers funding assistance for qualified in-state expenditures of up to 30% for motion pictures. No funding assistance will be distributed until the approved production has completed principal photography and submitted the required completion package documents. Directors and producers may apply for the SBPI and may only receive SBPI funding one time.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Academy Awards A short film is defined as an original motion picture that has a running time of 40 minutes or less, including all credits.

Projects that are fully funded may apply for the SBPI may apply for funding assistance at any time of the year (pending the If approved for conditional funding assistance, once fully funded and before receiving the certified funding letter of intent, the production must verify that the project has not undergone significant changes since time of application.

***Enhanced Incentives***

If a production meets the following spend thresholds of \$500,000 for motion pictures, \$300,000 per episode for episodic series, and \$150,000 for commercials, then the project may qualify for up to an additional 10% return on qualified in-state expenditures if they film in a rural county and/or tell the story of a historically underrepresented community.

In the event that a qualified production is telling the story of a historically underrepresented community and filming in a rural county, WF will allow for a maximum of a 10% incentive enhancement on all qualified Washington production expenses.

***Nonresident Labor***

Some nonresident labor may qualify for incentive dollars if certain criteria are met.

For more details read the Guidelines and Criteria for the SBPI on [Washington Filmworks website](http://WashingtonFilmworks.com).

Questions? Email us at [Info@washingtonfilmworks.org](mailto:Info@washingtonfilmworks.org)

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