

Note: for the purposes of the Above the Line Mentorship for Documentary Filmmakers the 2023 Guidelines & Criteria and Application have been updated to substitute narrative-specific language with documentary-specific language.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Above the Line Mentorship Overview

1. Introduction
2. What is Available

Mentorship Program Eligibility

1. Requirements
2. Program Disqualification

Mentorship Program Application

1. Overview
2. Application Process
3. Application Review and Funding Notification

Mentorship Program Requirements

Definition of Terms

Addendum

1. [Above the Line: Mentorship Application Preview](#)

ABOVE THE LINE MENTORSHIP OVERVIEW

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 Washington Filmworks to allocate money to support workforce development.

Washington Filmworks (WF) is the private non-profit organization that manages funding programs 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 Above the Line Mentorship Program?

To qualify to apply for the Above the Line mentorship, applicants must be an Above the Line Education Forum graduate, defined as attending 80% of the classes and panels.

All participants who successfully completed the education forum may apply for a six month mentorship to further develop a documentary project by working with a film professional in Washington State and a film professional from a major production market such as Los Angeles or New York. Up to 5 mentorships will be available to develop projects with budgets of \$20,000 - \$1 million (which includes both in-state and any out-of-state spending.) Each producer and director selected for a mentorship may invite a creative partner of their choice to participate in the mentorship as their project is developed.

The program includes stipends for participation and travel and accommodations will be covered for any in-person opportunities. Filmmakers who successfully completed the education forum and that represent communities across the state and / or have a wide array of lived experience are encouraged to apply!

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

Requirements

An individual is eligible for the mentorship program if they meet all the requirements below:

1. The applicant of record is a Washington resident producer or director.
2. Applicants must be 18 years or older.
3. Applicants must be able to provide a social security number or an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN).
4. The applicant successfully completed the current season of the education forum and attended at least 80% of the programming.
5. The applicant must identify as an individual from a historically underrepresented community. (For a definition of historically underrepresented community see section titled Definition of Terms)
6. The applicant must have a documentary feature (minimum of 40 minutes in length) or episodic series (minimum of 25 minutes in length) to develop with a mentor that is

budgeted between \$20,000 - \$1 million (which includes in-state and any out-of-state spend.)

7. Applicants may not be current WF Board Members or staff, or any jury members participating in the evaluation process. Applicants that do not disclose any immediate conflicts with those previously listed, or any other actual, or reasonably foreseeable potential conflict of interest, may be disqualified at any time.
8. Each applicant may identify a creative partner to work with during the mentorship to develop the project.
 - a. Program participants will be responsible for scheduling and directing how the time is used with mentors to best maximize the impact of the opportunity.
9. If selected to participate, the applicant must sign a legally binding contract with WF.
10. Once the participant is ready to go into production, funding their projects through the [Small Budget Production Initiative](#) will be a priority for the WF Board of Directors.

Program Disqualification

An individual will be disqualified from the program if:

1. The applicant engages in fraud or misrepresentation, fails to comply with all applicable laws, or otherwise acts in a manner that materially damages the mission of WF to enhance the development and competitiveness of the motion picture industry in Washington.
2. The applicant fails to meet requirements of the mentorship.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM APPLICATION

Overview

Applications for the mentorship program can be found and submitted via [Washington Filmworks' website](#). If selected to move to the second round of the application process, applicants must be available for an interview either virtually or in person. Filmmakers who successfully completed the education component and that represent communities across the state and / or have a wide array of lived experience are encouraged to apply!

Application Process

1. WF will review each application to ensure all necessary documentation has been submitted. If the application is incomplete or documents are missing, WF will contact the applicant to request the missing information.
2. During review of the application, WF may request additional information or discuss the initial application with the applicant. The applicant will have up to three business days to supply any additional information requested by WF unless otherwise negotiated. If

the information is not received within the allotted time, WF has the right to remove the application from the process.

3. Applicants must certify that their project in development is not engaged, to any extent, in the production of erotic material, as defined in [RCW 9.68.050](#).
4. Applicants will be selected to participate based on any or all of the following factors (not listed in any order of significance):
 - a. Impact that the mentorship and completed project will have in advancing the individuals' career
 - b. History of successful fundraising
 - c. Eligibility requirements and additional eligibility requirements as in these guidelines and criteria
 - d. Ability of the project to be fully realized
 - e. Positive impact the motion picture will have in the community if the project is filmed
 - f. Type of production the applicant would like to develop with a mentor (including considerations if the project is telling the story of a historically underrepresented community or intends to film in rural Washington)
 - g. Other benefits to the state the project can provide, including but not limited to promotional value, long-term financial benefits, contribution to development of Washington State crew and talent base or production industry infrastructure
 - h. Professional history of the applicant and its key players in decision making roles in the project. This includes, but is not limited to, issues relating to:
 - i. Unpaid financial obligations, including employee benefits
 - ii. Cast, crew or supplier mistreatment
 - iii. Unrepaired damage to locations
 - iv. Fraud, misrepresentation or violations of law that affect production

Application Review and Funding Notification

1. A jury of industry professionals will review each application and select finalists to move on to the interview panel.
2. The jury will use a rubric to evaluate each application.
3. All decisions about applicant participation will be at the sole discretion of WF Board of Directors or any such other committee or group designated by the Board of Directors.
4. A decision about program participation will be confirmed by a participant letter of intent which will include the applicant's name, the name of the project they will be developing in the mentorship program and the required time commitment and dates of the program.

5. Participants will be required to execute a written agreement with WF within one week of receiving the participation letter of intent. If the WF agreement is not signed and returned by the applicant within one week of the date of the participation letter of intent, WF may revoke its commitment.
6. The written agreement with WF will include:
 - a. Applicant's acceptance and conformance to the mentorship Guidelines and Criteria
 - b. Applicant's full application
7. If an applicant is not chosen for the mentorship program, they may not reapply at a later date.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

If selected to participate in the mentorship, the following outlines the requirements of the program:

1. Participants must work 4-6 hours a month with mentors on any of the following topics: story treatment notes, pitching projects, budgeting, financier introductions / influencer meeting, working in Washington, and fielding general questions.
2. Participants must attend two in-person events during the six month mentorship including:
 - a. Lab Intensive: A weekend launch event to pitch projects, get acquainted with program participants / mentors and participate in workshops.
 - b. Pitch Event: An end of program celebratory event which will give teams the opportunity to pitch their projects to a live audience.
3. To qualify for the participation stipend, individuals must attend a majority of the week's programming.
4. During the mentorship, program participants must attend a monthly check-in with WF staff.
5. When a participant exits the program, they must fill out an assessment of the program and do a 1:1 exit interview with WF staff.
6. Once the story treatment is finalized and the budget confirmed, participants will have priority to receive the [Small Budget Production Initiative](#) funding.
7. Once approved for the Small Budget Production Initiative program, each team will receive up to \$20,000 (final amount will be determined as a percentage of their total in-state spend) to help cover the cost of pre-production expenses such as legal assistance and marketing materials.
 - a. If the project is funded and goes into production, these advance funds will be deducted from the funding assistance being held in reserve for the project.

- b. If the project does not get made, the program participant will not be responsible for reimbursing the funds to WF.
8. In the program's inaugural year, WF will endeavor to find a partner organization to provide fiscal sponsorship opportunities for each production.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. *Applicant* – A Washington resident director or producer responsible for signing the application and, if approved, the legally binding agreement between WF.
2. *Creative Partner* - One individual that the program participant chooses to work with on the development of their project during the mentorship.
3. *Director* – One who directs the production of motion pictures, as the word "direct" is commonly used in the motion picture industry.
4. *Documentary* - a nonfiction motion picture intended to document reality and address cultural, artistic, historical, social, scientific, and/or economic subjects. While the documentaries may include footage of current events, sports, or politics, for the purposes of this program, projects may not be entirely a production of any of the following:
 - a. News, current events, or programs that include weather or financial market reports as a material portion of the programs
 - b. Talk shows, game shows, or contests
 - c. Broadcast or rebroadcast of sports events or activities
 - d. Award shows, galas, or any production with the purpose of soliciting donations
 - e. Political advertising
 - f. Productions produced primarily for industrial, corporate, or institutional purposes
5. *Education Forum Graduate* - Program participants who have attended a minimum of 80% of the classes and panels in the education forum.
6. *Episodic Series* – Multiple installments of an ongoing motion picture production generally less than 60 minutes in length.
7. *Historically Underrepresented Community* – As a result of feedback from community members, WF prefers using the term “historically underrepresented communities” in place of the term “marginalized communities.” For this program, “historically underrepresented community” has the same meaning as “marginalized community.”

8. *Marginalized Community* – The term "marginalized communities" refers to groups of persons who have been relegated to an unimportant or powerless position such that they are prevented from participating fully in decisions affecting their lives. People may experience further marginalization because of their intersecting identities.

They are often communities or populations that face systemic economic, political, social, and cultural barriers, many of them embedded in local laws and norms. The term encompasses communities with a shared experience of marginalization stemming from circumstances beyond their control.

Marginalized communities often include Black, Latino, Indigenous and American Indian/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders, and other persons of color, members of religious minorities, refugees, migrants, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQIA2S+¹) persons, rural communities, formerly incarcerated persons, persons experiencing homelessness, and persons with disabilities.

9. *Motion Picture* – A recorded audio-visual production intended for distribution to the public for exhibition in public and / or private settings by means of any and all delivery systems and / or delivery platforms now or hereafter known, including without limitation, screenings in motion picture theaters, broadcasts and cablecast transmissions for viewing on televisions, computer screens, and other audio-visual receivers, viewing on screens by means of digital video disc (DVD) players, video on demand (VOD) services, and digital video recording (DVR) services, direct internet transmission, and viewing on digital computer-based systems which respond to the users' actions (interactive media).
10. *Participant Agreement* – The contractual agreement between WF and the program participant which outlines the terms and conditions of program participation and program disqualification.
11. *Participant Signatory* – Individual that will serve as the signatory on WF contractual agreement.
12. *Participation Letter of Intent* – Document issued by WF that confirms the applicant's participation in the Mentorship program. The participation letter of intent is also included in the legally binding agreement.

¹ Taken from [National Assoc. of Social Workers](#): People who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or gender expansive, queer and/or questioning, intersex, asexual, and two-spirit

13. *Producer* – The primary individual associated with the production responsible for overseeing the motion picture’s financial, business and creative decisions. In evaluating applications, consideration may be given by WF to other parties bearing “producer-type” credits.
14. *Production Company* – A business that is primarily (defined as 50% or more) engaged in the business of producing motion pictures.
15. *Washington Filmworks (WF)* – The 501(c)(6) non-profit organization that manages the MPCP pursuant to RCW 43.365 and 82.04.4489 that will oversee the State of Washington’s funding assistance program for qualified productions.
16. *Washington State Resident* – An individual who maintains a permanent dwelling within the state, and spends an aggregate of at least six months each year within the state, and signs a Declaration of Residency certifying that they have been a Washington State resident for at least six months prior to the date production begins. See [Declaration of Residency](#).
17. *Workforce Development* - Workforce development may vary by sector and place, and encompasses initiatives that educate, train, and prepare people to meet current and future industry needs. Individuals, educational systems, employers, Unions, community-based organizations, and governmental agencies are all important collaborators in workforce development.

###

ADDENDUM 1

[Above the Line: Mentorship Application Preview](#)