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ABOVE THE LINE EDUCATION FORUM 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 Education Forum?

Education Forum

The Above the Line Education Forum will provide educational opportunities for up to 25 rising Washington State directors and producers who are working in narrative or documentary formats and identify as an individual from an [historically underrepresented community](#). Filmmakers from communities across the state and individuals that have a wide array of lived experience are encouraged to apply.

The Education Forum will take place over 15 weeks (please see the [WF website](#) for current program dates), and each week film industry professionals will present on topics such as legal basics, budgeting, financing, production, working in Washington and marketing / distribution. Education Forum sessions will be held virtually, along with opportunities for in-person events.

The program includes scholarship funds to support each active participant up to a total of \$1,875. Travel and accommodations will be covered for any in-person opportunities, in accordance with Washington Filmworks expense policy.

Mentorship

Graduates of the Education Forum may have the opportunity to apply for a six-month mentorship to further develop a long form narrative or documentary project to be filmed in Washington State 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.

More detailed information can be found within the current Above the Line Mentorship Guidelines & Criteria.

EDUCATION FORUM ELIGIBILITY

Requirements

An individual is eligible for the Education Forum if they meet all the requirements below:

1. The applicant of record for the program is a Washington resident producer or director.
2. The applicant of record may not have participated in the Above the Line Education Forum previously.
3. 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)
4. Applicants must have experience making filmed content as a producer or director.
5. Applicants must be 18 years old or older at the time of application.
6. Applicants must be able to provide a social security number or an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN).
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. If selected to participate, the applicant must sign a legally binding contract with WF.

Program Disqualification

An individual will be disqualified as an applicant or dismissed from the program if:

1. The individual 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 individual fails to meet the requirements of the Education Forum.

3. The individual engages in behavior or speech that is harmful, oppressive, or violent, or otherwise acts in a manner that damages or disrupts the learning environment and/or safety of others.

EDUCATION FORUM APPLICATION

Overview

Applications for the Education Forum can be found and submitted via [Washington Filmworks' website](#).

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 will be selected to participate based on any or all of the following factors (not listed in any order of significance):
 - a. Positive impact that the Education Forum will have on participant's film career
 - b. Previous experience making filmed content
 - c. Demonstrated success of completing projects and filmed content
 - d. Eligibility requirements
 - e. Potential to exemplify the best of Washington State's film industry
 - f. Professional history of the applicant in decision making roles on filmed projects. 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 with a wide array of lived experience will review each application.
2. The jury will use a rubric to evaluate each application.
3. All decisions about applicant participation in the Education Forum 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 participation letter of intent which will include the applicant's name and the required participation dates of the program.
5. Participants will be required to execute a written agreement with WF. 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 Education Forum Guidelines and Criteria

- b. Applicant's full application
 - c. Cohort schedule
7. If an applicant is not chosen for the Education Forum, they may re-apply at a later date.

EDUCATION FORUM REQUIREMENTS

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

1. Participants are expected to engage and participate in each scheduled session.
2. Participants are expected to attend any scheduled in-person events.
3. Participants are expected to honor the community agreements collaboratively set at the start of each cohort.
4. Participants will provide a bio and photo for use in WF marketing and programmatic reporting.
5. To qualify for scholarship support, participants must remain active in the program .
 - a. In order to remain active, a participant must be present for >65% of required sessions.
 - b. Present is defined as attending the majority of a session, and is calculated based on actual session time.
 - c. Participants will be given credit for any session canceled by Washington Filmworks.
6. Participants should be advised that to qualify for the Mentorship, there is a minimum requirement to attend >80% of required sessions.
7. Participants will complete self-assessments before, during, and following the program.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. *Applicant* – A Washington resident director or producer responsible for signing the application and, if selected, the legally binding agreement between WF.
2. *Director* – One who directs the production of motion pictures, as the word "direct" is commonly used in the motion picture industry.
3. *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

4. *Education Forum Graduate* - Program participants who have attended a minimum of 80% of the classes and panels in the Education Forum.
5. *Episodic Series* – Multiple installments of an ongoing motion picture production each generally less than 60 minutes in length and a minimum of 25 minutes in length.
6. *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” which 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.

Historically underrepresented 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.

7. *Longform Content* – A feature film or episodic series with a narrative or thematic thread over a number of episodes.
8. *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).
9. *Narrative Film* – A motion picture that tells a fictional story, often following a structured plot with a beginning, middle, and end.

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

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 selection to participate in the Education Forum.
13. *Producer* – The primary individual associated with the production responsible for overseeing the motion picture's financial, business and creative decisions.
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. For the purposes of this program, the date of the program participation letter of intent will be used to calculate residency. 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.

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