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## 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?*

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 required sessions during their Education Forum cohort.

Education Forum graduates may apply for a six month mentorship to further develop a long form narrative or 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.)

The Mentorship provides scholarship funds to support participation, and travel and accommodations will be covered for any in-person opportunities.

Participants who successfully complete the Mentorship are eligible to receive priority consideration for the project which they developed within the Mentorship with the Board of Directors for SBPI funding. This priority is extended to any application window that opens during the active Mentorship, and any of the three application windows that open after the conclusion of the Mentorship. These same timelines apply to fully funded projects that can take advantage of rolling applications.

## **MENTORSHIP ELIGIBILITY**

### *Requirements*

An individual is eligible for the Mentorship 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 one of the three previous Education Forums and attended at least 80% of the required 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 long form narrative or documentary feature film (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. If selected to participate, the applicant must sign a legally binding contract with WF.

### *Mentorship Disqualification*

An individual will be disqualified from the Mentorship 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 requirements of the Mentorship.
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.

## **MENTORSHIP APPLICATION**

### *Overview*

Applications for the Mentorship 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.

#### *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. The applicant must provide: a complete script (narrative projects) or story treatment (documentary projects); a budget overview; and a pitch deck for the project they plan to develop during the Mentorship.
4. 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](#).
5. 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 individual's 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. Quality of submitted materials
  - i. Establishment of strong director/producer relationship guiding the project
  - j. 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. Each Mentorship will maintain three dedicated spots for graduates of the most recent Education Forum. The remaining two spots may be filled by a graduate of any of the previous three Education Forums.
4. 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.
5. A decision about program participation will be confirmed by a participation letter of intent which will include the applicant's name, the name of the project they will be developing in the Mentorship and the required time commitment and dates of the program.
6. 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.
7. The written agreement with WF will include:
  - a. Applicant's acceptance and conformance to the Mentorship Guidelines and Criteria
  - b. Applicant's full application
8. If an applicant is not chosen for the Mentorship, they may reapply for future Mentorships within their eligibility timeline.

## **MENTORSHIP REQUIREMENTS**

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

1. Participants must engage in the matchmaking process in order to be paired with two Mentors.
2. Participants must set and maintain a regular meeting schedule with their matched Mentors and engage 4-6 hours a month with each of their Mentors on topics and tasks to meaningfully move their project forward. This may include: budgeting, pitch deck revisions, financing strategy, introductions and networking, production scheduling, fielding general questions, and more.
3. Participants must attend two in-person events during the six month Mentorship including:
  - a. Intensive: A multi-day intensive prior to the start of the Mentorship to participate in panels and workshops, pitch projects, and get acquainted with fellow participants and mentors.
  - b. Pitch Event: An end of program event which will give participants the opportunity to pitch their projects to a live audience.
4. To qualify for the scholarship support, individuals must remain active in program.
  - a. In order to remain active, a participant must be meeting with their Mentors and WF staff monthly, and meaningfully moving their project toward production.
5. During the Mentorship, program participants must complete a monthly assessment and attend a monthly check-in with WF staff.
6. 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.
7. In order to successfully exit the Mentorship, participants will have completed the following key deliverables to industry standard:

- a. Pitch Deck
- b. Budget
- c. Script or Treatment
- d. Schedule
- e. Financing plan
- f. Identification of key personnel

## 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 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+<sup>1</sup>) 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.
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 Mentorship.
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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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

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.

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