



**Academy's Documentary Feature Films
Qualifying Festivals and Awards Organizations
Application Requirements and Guidelines**

Tuesday, May 19, 2026 Applications and Payments Open

Thursday, August 27, 2026 Applications Close and Payments Due by 5:00pm Pacific Time

Application fee: \$250 (USD)

A one-time non-refundable application fee is required per festival or awards organization.

Film festivals and awards organizations may apply if they meet the minimum requirements. Meeting requirements and fee payment ensures a prompt and thorough review, but approval is not guaranteed.

Per the 99th Awards Rules, a Documentary Feature film is defined by the Academy as an original motion picture with a total runtime of more than forty minutes, including credits. An eligible documentary film is defined as a nonfiction motion picture dealing creatively with cultural, artistic, historical, social, scientific, economic or other subjects. It may be photographed in actual occurrence, or may employ partial reenactment, stock footage, stills, animation, stop-motion or other techniques, as long as the emphasis is on fact and not on fiction.

This application process opens every three years.

FILM FESTIVALS AND AWARDS ORGANIZATIONS
APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Film festivals and awards organizations must meet *all* the requirements below to be eligible to apply for consideration.

- Film festivals and awards organizations must be currently active and have completed at least 10 consecutive editions before the application year.
- Film festivals and awards organizations that only screen student films are not eligible.

- Film festivals and awards organizations must screen films in competition in a standard theatrical setting, or within a screening environment consistent with the technical and experiential standards of a theater and considered equivalent to the theatrical experience by the appropriate committees.
- Film festivals and awards organizations must have at least one established juried documentary feature film award that is active and awarded every festival edition by a jury of film professionals relevant to the respective award category. Festivals should be able to provide a list of at least three past winners of the established award.
- Film festivals and awards organizations may apply for a maximum of three individual documentary feature film juried awards.
- Film Festivals and awards organizations must be based and operated outside of the United States to be eligible to apply for a Documentary Feature Film award.

Establishments such as awards organizations, film academies, guilds, trade organizations, and other institutions whose award winners are determined by a voting body consisting of professional members in the entertainment industry, or by a jury of the same, are eligible to apply if all application requirements are met.

APPLICATION GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

- Applicants must present, support, and promote documentary screenings and other events involving documentaries in each edition. Documentaries should be promoted in marketing materials and communications and should be meaningfully integrated into the festival program. Documentary filmmakers should be equally supported through engagement opportunities such as film screenings, Q&As, panels, networking events, and hospitality.
- Applicants must have a substantial volume of documentary feature film submissions. While there is no fixed minimum, festivals and awards organizations should receive a volume of submissions that reflects broad appeal regionally and/or internationally.
- Applicants must have a rigorous selection process. Generally, this would include a formal procedure conducted by a group of qualified programmers, clearly defined selection criteria and standards, an acceptance rate that reflects competitiveness, and transparent curation practices that demonstrate a commitment to quality as defined by the film festival or organization.
- The film selection process should be handled in an ethical, impartial manner. This includes, but is not limited to:

- a) avoiding conflicts of interest, such as festival personnel selecting films in which they have a personal or financial interest.
 - b) evaluating submissions based on artistic merit and alignment with the festival's programming goals.
 - c) ensuring that all submissions receive fair and consistent consideration by the programming team.
- Each award under consideration for qualifying status should be the top juried prize awarded to one film. The award(s) submitted should be the highest and most distinguished juried award(s). Runners-up, honorable mentions, and audience awards will not be considered.
 - Established awards that highlight diverse and inclusive topics and underrepresented filmmakers are encouraged to submit for consideration.
 - Documentary feature film juries should be comprised of experienced filmmakers in their field and/or film industry professionals. Applicants will be required to submit information regarding prior jurors and the procedures used in their selection.
 - Applicants must operate in a manner that is ethical and professional. Festivals must uphold Academy values of respect for human dignity and inclusion within an environment that fosters creativity. Festivals must not tolerate harassment, discrimination, abuse, censorship, or exclusion of any kind and must have clear procedures to prevent and address misconduct. They are expected to act with integrity, transparency, and accountability, safeguarding the rights, safety, and well-being of all participants and communities. Compliance is mandatory; failure to meet these standards may result in ineligibility or loss of accreditation.

Applications will be reviewed by the appropriate Academy committees. If approved, the appropriate committees will determine which award(s) will be accepted as qualifying for the Academy's Documentary Feature Film category. Approved festivals and awards will be Oscar qualifying from Friday, October 1, 2027 to September 30, 2030.

** Film festivals and non-US based awards organizations that have an established Short Film competition may apply for consideration. For more information, please see the Short Films Qualifying Festival application requirements and guidelines.*

***The appropriate committees retain the right to evaluate a festival on a case-by-case basis.*

For more information or questions, please contact qualifyingfestivals@oscars.org.

*****All dates are subject to change*****

The Academy reserves the right to make final determinations regarding all rules, eligibility and procedures