

**RULE TWELVE
SPECIAL RULES FOR THE
DOCUMENTARY FEATURE FILM AWARD**

I. DEFINITION

An eligible documentary film is defined as a theatrically released 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.

A feature-length film is defined as an original motion picture that has a running time of more than 40 minutes.

II. ELIGIBILITY

- A. To be eligible for awards consideration for the 96th Awards year, a documentary feature film must fulfill one of the following qualifying criteria. The eligibility period begins on January 1, 2023, and ends on December 31, 2023. This qualification must take place within two years of the film's completion date.
1. The picture must have been publicly exhibited for **paid admission** in a commercial motion picture theater in one of the six qualifying U.S. metro areas: Los Angeles County; City of New York [five boroughs]; the Bay Area [counties of San Francisco, Marin, Alameda, San Mateo and Contra Costa]; Chicago [Cook County, Illinois]; Miami [Miami-Dade County, Florida]; and Atlanta [Fulton County, Georgia], for a run of at least seven consecutive days. Screenings during the theatrical release must occur at least three times daily, with at least one screening beginning between 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. daily. The motion picture must be advertised during its qualifying theatrical release in a manner normal and customary to theatrical feature distribution practices and may receive movie critic reviews. Drive-in theaters are included as a qualifying commercial venue in the above metro areas (films must run for seven consecutive days with at least one screening daily).

All eligible motion pictures must be publicly exhibited by means of 35mm or 70mm film, or in a 24- or 48-frame progressive scan Digital Cinema format with a minimum projector resolution of 2048 by 1080 pixels, source image format conforming to ST 428-1:2006 D-Cinema Distribution Master – Image Characteristics; image compression (if used) conforming to ISO/IEC 15444-1 (JPEG 2000); and image and sound files packaged as Digital Cinema Packages (DCPs) in the “SMPTE DCP” format. SMPTE DCP refers to SMPTE ST 429-2:2020 D-Cinema Packaging – DCP Operational Constraints and related specifications. (Blu-ray format does not meet Digital Cinema requirements.)

The audio in a Digital Cinema Package (DCP) is typically 5.1 or 7.1 channels of discrete audio. The minimum for a non-mono configuration of the audio shall be three channels as Left, Center, Right (a Left/Right configuration is not acceptable in a theatrical environment). In addition to channel-based audio, object-based audio may also be present as an immersive audio bitstream.

The discrete audio data shall be formatted in conformance with SMPTE ST 429-3:2007 D-Cinema Packaging – Sound and Picture Track File, SMPTE ST 428-2:2006 D-Cinema Distribution Master – Audio Characteristics and SMPTE ST 428-12:2013 D-Cinema Distribution Master Common Audio Channels and Soundfield Groups. Immersive audio, if present, shall be formatted in conformance with SMPTE ST 2098-2:2019 Immersive Audio Bitstream Specification and SMPTE 429-18:2019 D-Cinema Packaging – Immersive Audio Track File and packaged in

conformance with SMPTE 429-19:2019 D-Cinema Packaging – DCP Operational Constraints for Immersive Audio.

OR

2. The film must have won a qualifying award at a competitive film festival, as specified in the Documentary Feature Film Qualifying Festival List, regardless of any prior public exhibition or distribution by nontheatrical means. Proof of the award must be submitted with the entry. The Documentary Feature Film Qualifying Festival List is available at www.oscars.org or may be obtained from the Academy.

OR

3. The film must have been submitted in the International Feature Film category as its country's official selection for the 96th Academy Awards.
- B. Works that are essentially promotional or instructional are not eligible, nor are works that are essentially unfiltered records of performances.
- C. Only individual documentary works are eligible. This excludes from consideration such works as:
- multi-part or limited series,
 - episodes extracted from a larger series,
 - segments taken from a single "composite" program, and
 - alternate versions of ineligible works.
- D. **Films that, in any version, receive a nontheatrical public exhibition or distribution before their qualifying theatrical release as defined in Paragraph II.A.1 above will not be eligible for Academy Awards consideration.** Nontheatrical public exhibition or distribution includes but is not limited to:
- Broadcast and cable television
 - PPV/VOD
 - DVD distribution
 - Inflight airline distribution
 - Internet transmission

Up to fifteen percent of the running time of a film is allowed to be shown in a nontheatrical medium prior to the film's theatrical release.

Films qualifying under Paragraph II.A.2 or II.A.3 above are exempted from this rule.

III. SUBMISSION

- A. For films qualifying between January 1, 2023, and June 30, 2023, entrants must submit all submission materials, including the digital upload of the film for streaming purposes, by 5 p.m. PT on **Tuesday, August 15, 2023**. For films qualifying between July 1, 2023, and December 31, 2023, entrants must submit all submission materials, including the digital upload of the film for streaming purposes, by 5 p.m. PT on **Monday, October 2, 2023**.
- B. The picture must be submitted in the same Awards year in which it first qualifies. Documentaries submitted for the 96th Academy Awards in any category will not be eligible for consideration in subsequent Awards years in any category.
- C. Entrants must complete the online submission form located on the Academy's Awards Submission

site and submit to the Academy the digital upload of the film for streaming purposes. The digital upload of the film submitted for Academy Awards consideration must be identical in content and length to the print or DCP that qualified. For films with a planned theatrical release before the end of the calendar year, but which will not have a locked picture by the submission deadline, entrants may request an extension for the digital upload only. For films qualifying after the submission deadline, entrants must provide documentation from the qualifying theater confirming that the film will satisfy the release requirements.

- D. The significant dialogue or narration must be substantially in English, or the film must have English-language subtitles.
- E. Filmmakers whose entries advance to the shortlist must submit either one 35mm or 70mm film print or one DCP of the film after the shortlist is announced. The Academy will retain for its archives one film print or DCP of every film receiving a nomination. By submitting a film, the filmmaker agrees that the Academy has the right to make copies and distribute them for voting purposes only.

IV. NOMINEES AND AWARD RECIPIENTS

- A. The nominee(s) should be the individual(s) most involved in the key creative aspects of the filmmaking process. Normally **two or three persons may be named as nominees, one of whom must be the credited director who exercised directorial control, and the other(s) of whom must have a director or producer credit.** If a producer is named, that individual must have performed a major portion of the producing functions, in accordance with Academy producer criteria. Production companies or persons with the screen credit of executive producer, co-producer or any credit other than director or producer shall not be eligible as nominees for the motion picture. In determining the number of producers eligible for nomination, a bona fide team of not more than two people shall be considered to be a single "producer" if the two individuals have had an established producing partnership as determined by the PGA's Producing Partnership Panel.
- B. All individuals with a "producer" or "produced by" credit on films that reach the semifinal round will automatically be vetted. To qualify as a producer nominee for a nominated picture, the producer must have been determined eligible by the PGA for the picture, or have appealed the PGA's refusal of such eligibility. Final determination of the qualifying producer nominees for each nominated picture will be made by the Documentary Branch Executive Committee, including the right to name any additional qualified producer as a nominee.

V. VOTING

- A. All active and life members of the Documentary Branch will be invited to view the eligible submissions in the category and will be required to see a minimum number as defined by the current procedures. Members will vote by secret ballot in the order of their preference for not more than fifteen motion pictures. The fifteen motion pictures receiving the highest number of votes shall advance to next round of voting.
- B. To determine nominations, all active and life members of the Documentary Branch will be invited to view the fifteen shortlisted Documentary Feature Films. A member must see all shortlisted films for the ballot to be counted. Members shall vote in the order of their preference for not more than five motion pictures. The five motion pictures receiving the highest number of votes shall become the nominations for final voting for the Documentary Feature Film award.
- C. Final voting shall be restricted to active and life members of the Academy who have viewed all of the nominated documentaries.

VI. OTHER RULES

- A. Documentaries submitted in this category may also qualify for awards in other categories if they meet

the specified requirements and submission deadlines.

B. The Documentary Branch Executive Committee shall resolve all questions of eligibility and rules.