



Community Film Festival Opening Night Fund

Program Guidelines

About the program

The new Community Film Festival Opening Night Fund will offer grants of up to \$5,000 to established community-driven film festivals to enhance their opening nights and bring communities together to celebrate and connect through film. A total pool of \$200,000 will be available in the fund.

The grants can be used to cover costs such as venue hire, interpreters, marketing and promotion of the event, culturally-appropriate hospitality and entertainment, transport costs and many other expenses that add up when hosting a successful community opening night celebration.

Key information

- Funding amount: From \$0 to \$5,000
- Applications open: 11 September 2024
- Applications close: 3pm, 8 October 2024
- [Funding page](#)
- [Apply here](#)

Program objectives

The aims of the program are to:

- Support film festivals right across the state via their Opening Night event
- Ease the financial burden on small-medium film festivals that demonstrate a strong community origin and base

- Complement the existing funding available for film and community festivals in the state, including Screen NSW's Audience Development Fund and Destination NSW's Regional Event Fund
- Build audiences and community engagement
- Have an impact on audiences and communities in NSW
- Support impactful festivals which are also evolving to be relevant to future audiences and the screen industry
- Support underrepresented communities to tell their stories
- Showcase the rich cultural diversity of NSW.

This program is funded and administered by Screen NSW.

Eligibility

Who can apply

Funding for the Program is open to:

- Organisations, including companies and not for profit incorporated bodies, co-operatives, trusts or local government authorities
- A consortium or a group of organisations working collaboratively*

Applicants must be an Australian organisation with an ABN.

To be eligible for funding, organisations must be legally constituted and financially solvent. Applicants need to provide proof of their legal status.

Applicants must be an Australia-based organisation also adhere to the general eligibility requirements under the Screen NSW [Terms of Trade](#).

**In the case of a consortium or group of organisations working collaboratively, one eligible organisation must be nominated as the lead organisation. The funding grant agreement will be with the lead organisation.*

Who cannot apply

Applications for the funding will not be accepted from:

- Individuals, partnerships or groups of individuals and unincorporated organisations
- Government departments and agencies, primary and secondary schools, tertiary institutions and TAFE colleges
- Previous Screen NSW or Create NSW funding recipients who have not fulfilled the conditions of the funding and/or who are overdue in acquitting prior funding
- Festivals receiving a NSW Government contribution of over \$150,000
- Festivals with an annual budget of over \$1,500,000

- Multi-disciplinary or cultural festivals where screenings and screen culture account for less than 75% of programming activity.

Eligible projects

Funding is available to support activities related to the opening night of an established film festival in NSW held between 22 November 2024 and 31 December 2025.

Funding

The maximum grant amount is \$5,000 per applicant.

Organisations applying for funding are expected to secure other sources of income or in-kind support wherever feasible. Income may be derived from sources such as sponsorships, grants or subsidies from other agencies, revenue from ticket sales, fundraising and other activities.

Applications that do not include other sources of income or in-kind support are not considered as competitive.

What you can apply for:

- Venue hire
- Interpreters (language and/or Auslan)
- Cost associated with hosting a Welcome to Country ceremony
- Marketing and promotional costs for the event
- Culturally appropriate hospitality (e.g. catering) and entertainment (e.g. artist costs such as band/musicians)
- Transportation Costs (including reasonable travel expenses for the Opening Night film's key creatives to attend for a speaking opportunity)
- Licencing fee for the Opening Night film
- Equipment hire
- Documentation (photography or videography)
- Other event costs related to an Opening Night celebration.

What you cannot apply for

Funding for the Community Film Festival Opening Night Program will not be available for:

- Costs towards alcoholic beverages
- Costs related to ongoing programming of the festival
- Activities that have also received funding from Screen NSW or Create NSW for the same activity in the same financial year
- Costs incurred before the execution of a Funding Grant Agreement
- Development of production of screen content including festival trailers
- Awards or competition component of a film festival
- Operational costs

- Costs towards ongoing/existing staff
- Any other costs not related to the Opening Night event.

Selection criteria

All applications are assessed against a common set of five weighted criteria:

Project merit (25%)

Applications should include:

- A clear outline and rationale for the project including evidence of the need for or demand for the project, intended audience and location(s)
- Information about the personnel who will deliver the project including details of their roles, relevant experience and key achievements
- Details of the key activities, milestones and dates
- A clear explanation of how the requested funding will be used to contribute to the Opening Night event
- Quality and viability of the proposal i.e., does it fulfil a need and/or interest in the community
- Key result areas, indicators and targets for the project
- Evidence demonstrating the film festival is established, i.e., one or more of the following:
 - o The festival has successfully received funding from Screen NSW or Create NSW in two of the last five years, **or**
 - o Evidence that the film festival has been consistently delivered in the years leading up to the time of application, over the last six years (e.g. press on the festival, annual reports, programs, financial reporting) and at least twice in the last four years, **or**
 - o The organisation producing the event has a strong track record in delivering similar events and the proved ability to launch a new festival.

Audience development and participation (20%)

Applications should include well developed strategies for engaging the intended community and new audiences in opportunities to experience quality screen content and innovative practice including:

- Evidence of the need or demand for the project and why it should be regarded as a priority for funding, i.e. it would provide diverse screen content that a community would not otherwise have access to
- Evidence of established community links and support for the film festival in the community, i.e.:
 - o Letters of support from prominent members of the community
 - o Articles and coverage on the festival
 - o Festival programs
 - o Marketing and audience engagement reports.

- Plan is appropriate to the scale of the event and provides a clear strategy for attracting attendees and post-market surveys
- A marketing and outreach plan that demonstrates how the festival will reach its intended audience
- Level of media support, if any.

Benefits (25%)

The application should demonstrate that the project stimulates innovative screen industry practice in NSW and opportunities for the public, that the festival has a strong community base, and that this community ethos shapes the festival program.

The application will be required to define the community that the event serves and how any successful funding will contribute to audience development within that community.

Additionally, applications should articulate any opportunities for participation in screen industry development for one or more of the following key government priority areas:

- Regional NSW
- Western Sydney
- First Nations people
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- People living with disability
- LGBTQIA+ people

Please note that where an application is received from an organisation located outside of NSW, the project must be delivered in NSW or directly and strongly benefit NSW residents.

Organisational capacity (20%)

The application should provide brief information regarding the organisational capacity to deliver the project, including:

- An outline of the core business, aims and objectives of the organisation
- Previous performance and delivery of similar events
- An outline of the experience and expertise of the organisation as it relates to the project and the ability to successfully realise the event
- Comprehensive details of the organisation including board or committee, staff and governance arrangements
- Financial information for the previous year (actual) and current year (estimated)
- Evidence of the organisation's legal status.

The applicant organisation must have:

- Proven experience in successfully delivering similar activities
- Specialist screen industry experience.

Budget (10%)

The budget should provide sufficient detail to demonstrate that the project is cost effective, includes realistic income and expenditure targets and makes adequate provision for insurance and other liabilities. Explanatory notes should be used where needed.

A top-line projected project budget (the festival) and a top-line projected event budget (the Opening Night) must both be provided.

Recurring projects must include previous year's budget actuals for the full event indicating clear expenditure for Opening Night costs (where an Opening Night event occurred). Confirmation of in-kind and cash support should be substantiated by supporting documentation. Please refer to the template budget link in the application form.

Other Considerations

Where an applicant does not provide the required information identified above, Screen NSW reserves the right to:

- Provide the applicant with the opportunity to provide the required information within probity requirements; or
- Assess the application based on the information provided; or
- Deem the application to be non-conforming and decline the application, including where the application is considered not viable due to unsatisfactory governance.

Other relevant factors and risks may also be considered, as determined by Screen NSW, in its sole discretion, including:

- Assessment of the applicant's management, its directors and officers and entities or individuals that exercise control over an applicant against the eligibility criteria; and
- Assessment of other factors that may cause applicants to be unsuitable for support, such as any personnel or business activities that could cause reputational or other risk to the NSW Government.

Screen NSW reserves the right to use any other resource, process or procedure available - which may include the use of third-party services - to assess any claims made by, or risks associated with, the Applicant.

What your application needs to include

Support material plays a vital role in how we understand and assess your application. Choose high-quality support material that is concise, current and directly relevant to your application.

Support material for proposals involving the Aboriginal arts and cultural sector and/or Aboriginal people, organisations and cultural material must include letters of support and confirmation of involvement from the relevant communities and/or organisations (see [NSW Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Protocols](#)).

Other support material may include:

- A program of activities
- Relevant and recent examples of your artistic work (images, video, recordings, written material or links to websites)
- A brief biography or CV for any screen practitioners or key collaborators involved in the project (maximum one A4 page per person)
- Confirmation letters and/or letters of support related to your project (provided as one document), such as from partners, venues, key sector contacts or other funding agencies.

Please submit your support material in the amount and format required, including:

- Combined files not exceeding 25MB
- Up to five minutes of video or audio recording
- No zipped or compressed files
- Documents in PDF format where possible
- Links for externally hosted work only.

Assessment process

Once your application has been submitted, you will receive an email confirmation from our secure online grants system, SmartyGrants.

Late applications due to technical difficulties will be reviewed and eligibility determined with absolute discretion by the Head, Screen NSW. You must lodge a request for a late application by email to industry@screen.nsw.gov.au setting out the reasons for the request, along with any evidence, by 4pm on the day applications close.

Eligibility

Applications will be initially reviewed by Screen NSW staff to ensure they meet eligibility requirements, and all application materials are acceptable. If your application is assessed as ineligible, you will be advised in writing within 14 days.

Assessment

If your application is considered eligible, it will progress to the assessment panel for consideration against the Assessment Criteria. The Assessment Panel will consist of a minimum of one Screen NSW staff member (Chair) and two external advisors with relevant expertise. Each panel member will assess and score applications individually, before meeting as a group to discuss the results and finalise recommendations.

Based on outcome of the assessment meeting recommendations will be made in writing to the decision-maker.

Please note that funding allocation follows a competitive process. Evaluations will consider the assessment criteria outlined above and the availability of funds at Screen NSW.

Recommendation

The recommendations from the assessment panel will be provided to the Head, Screen NSW for consideration and approval. The assessment process will take up to 7 weeks from the application closing date. Screen NSW aims to advise applicants of the outcome via email by 22 November 2024.

Additional Considerations

Additional considerations Screen NSW may, at its sole discretion, and at any stage of the application process, do all or any of the following:

- Require additional information from an applicant;
- Change the scope or the requirements of these guidelines vary, amend (including by replacement) or terminate the application process, and
- Re-open an application after the closing date, provided it doesn't give the applicant an advantage over other applicants.

Award process

If successful, the applicant must enter into, and abide by the terms of, a Funding Grant Agreement with Screen NSW, which will include details of the funding's deliverables, acquittal requirements and treatment of unspent funds.

The award of funding is subject to execution this agreement and satisfactory completion of all terms contained within the Agreement.

Screen NSW will not enter into agreements until all previous grants with Screen NSW or Create NSW have been acquitted.

Variations

Any variations to the Funding Grant Agreement, including project scope or activities, location or timeframes outlined in the application form and Grant Guidelines must be submitted in writing for approval from Screen NSW. Failure to do so may result in the withdrawal of the grant offer.

Screen NSW has the discretion to approve or reject any variation request from a grantee where the grant agreement has already been executed.

To submit a variation request, or if you are unsure if your enquiry qualifies as a variation, please contact the Screen Industry and Audience team at industry@screen.nsw.gov.au.

Publication of grants information

The Grants Administration Guide (Guide) requires that certain information is published in relation to grants awarded no later than 45 calendar days after the funding agreement takes effect (see section 6.5 of the Guide and Appendix A to the Guide).

This information is also open access information under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW) (GIPA Act), which must be made publicly available unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of the information.

In accordance with these requirements, relevant information about the funding awarded will be made available on the NSW Government Grants and Funding Finder as soon as possible after the funding agreement is executed.

All records in relation to this decision will be managed in accordance with the requirements of the *State Records Act 1998* (NSW).

Conflict of Interest Management

Any conflicts of interest will be managed in accordance with NSW Government Grants Administration Guide.

A conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, may be identified if staff, any member of a committee or advisor and/or you or any of your personnel:

- has a professional, commercial, or personal relationship with a party who can influence the application selection process, or
- has a relationship with or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently, or
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation received funding under the program.

If you identify an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest at any time, you must inform Screen NSW immediately. Screen staff can be contacted by email: industry@screen.nsw.gov.au

NSW Government staff, committee members and other officials including the decision maker must declare any conflicts of interest and ensure they are managed as per the DEIT Code of Ethics and Conduct and the Grants Administration Guide.



Start your application

[Apply here.](#)

Support and contact

Screen NSW staff are available to provide technical advice and general information to potential applicants on the interpretation of these guidelines, including the types of activity eligible for funding and support with the online application process.

Screen NSW staff cannot help directly with your application. To maintain a fair and equitable process, staff cannot edit or correct any applications or provide advice on the content or choices required against the Assessment Criteria.

For further information or clarification, please contact the Screen Industry and Audience team on industry@screen.nsw.gov.au.

Complaint handling, access to information and privacy

Details on how Screen NSW handles complaints, access to information and your private information is available at:

<https://www.create.nsw.gov.au/about-us/feedback-complaints-privacy-and-government-information>