



Sundance Documentary Fund Proposal Checklist – 2024

Logline (2 to 3 sentences)

Please provide a 2-3 sentence summary of the project that captures the most important elements – setting, participants*, key issues and form. *Participants is used throughout this document, but depending on the specifics of your project you may want to refer to your participants as characters/contributors/subjects/protagonists etc.

Topic Summary (up to 500 words)

Explain the relevant cultural, historical, political, or social context for the film. Detail the topics, issues, themes, stakes, or questions that you're exploring in your project.

Story or Concept Summary (up to 500 words)

Give an overview of your story, introducing the main participants and potential plot points. Describe the anticipated story and narrative trajectory or potential character arcs. If your project is non-narrative or not character-driven, what is your concept, and how is it constructed? Please be clear about the elements of your story that remain unknown or unclear and highlight the questions that may steer its direction.

Artistic Approach (up to 500 words)

Describe your artistic vision for your project. What are the formal elements of the project, including any creative or stylistic devices, visual and audio elements?

Connection and Positionality (up to 250 words)

What is your connection to the story (i.e., to the participants, community, location, archives, etc.)? How do your values, interests, motivations, and/or worldview shape your unique approach to this story? What lens, perspective, insights, or bias do you bring to the story?

Accountability and Community Care (up to 250 words)

What are the guiding values or ethics of your filmmaking practice of care? Describe your processes of accountability (i.e. consent, transparency, feedback) for the project.

Safety (optional, up to 250 words)

If relevant, please reflect on any known safety and security concerns throughout the lifecycle of your project – from development through distribution. Tell us how you plan to or have been mitigating any negative impacts or harm on the film's participants, communities, and the filmmaking team. *For further guidance, reference the [Safe and Secure Handbook](#).*

Creative Control (up to 50 words)

Who has creative control and, if applicable, ownership of the project?

Filmmaker(s) Statement(s) (up to 500 words per statement)

To be completed by Director(s) and/or Producer(s). Tell us about yourself as an artist. If applicable, how is this project expanding or evolving your creative practice? What does success look like for you as an artist? What are the creative, professional, or holistic barriers and challenges you are facing?

Project Stage and Timeline (up to 250 words)

Explain the current status of the project. Outline the projected production timeline in list form from the project's current state to the anticipated completion date. Please include major project activities, production schedules, and anticipated post-production and release dates.

Accessibility (up to 250 words)

How are you intending to make your film accessible to D/deaf, blind/low vision, disabled, and neurodiverse audiences? Are there opportunities to make your film more accessible during production for D/deaf, blind/low vision, disabled, and neurodiverse crew and/or film participants? *Please ensure that these accessibility costs (captions, audio descriptions, transcripts) are reflected in the submitted budget. For further guidance, reference the [FWD-Doc Toolkit](#) and the [FWD-Doc Engagement Pack](#).*

Distribution, Marketing, and Outreach (up to 500 words)

Describe the intended audience of your film. Specify any plans for festival, theatrical, and/or community screenings, as well as any plans for securing broadcast and/or distribution. How do you envision the relationship between the finished film and the participants and/or community being filmed, if relevant?

Intended Impact (optional, up to 500 words)

Articulate your vision for the influence you hope the film will have. What are your cultural, social and policy goals and strategies, if relevant for your project? *For further guidance, reference the [The Impact Field Guide](#).*

Key Creative Personnel (approximately 200 words/bio)

Provide brief biographies for the director(s), and if attached, the producer(s), cinematographer, and/or editor. For each key creative team member, include information about relevant expertise and the individual's role in the project. Bullet-list names and titles of any confirmed advisors who are attached.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The Documentary Fund prioritizes support for budgets under \$1 million in U.S. dollars.

Total Budget (USD)

Funds Secured (USD)

Fundraising Strategy (up to 200 words)

Describe the overall fundraising strategy and who from the team will lead these efforts for the film.

Grant Impact (up to 200 words)

Should you receive a grant, describe how any granted funds would be spent and how the funds would help you move forward with your project. Award decisions take six to eight months from the application deadline.

Funding to Date (USD)

Include all sources and amounts raised to date. Clearly distinguish between potential sources of funding and secured amounts. List the status of other sources of funding currently under consideration, whether to be applied for or pending. If applicable, please divide your list into different production stages (i.e., Development, Pre-Production, Production, Post-Production).

Example:

Foundation A	\$X	Secured
Private Investment A	\$X	Secured
Foundation B	\$X	Applied
Broadcast License A	\$X	In Negotiation
Crowdfunding	\$X	In Process (Campaign end date MM/DD/YY)

Comprehensive Line-Item Expense Budget

(PDF, Word, or Excel format)

Please provide a breakdown of your project's projected expenses, from development through release, in U.S. dollars, including a budget total. Please ensure that any costs mentioned in your above responses (i.e. accessibility, safety, duty of care) are reflected in the submitted budget.

For further guidance, reference [A \(Revised!\) Introduction to Documentary Budgeting](#).

VISUAL MATERIALS

Please provide links and passwords for both samples in your written proposal. Links and passwords should be valid for at least eight months from the date of your submission. The Sundance Institute guarantees watching up to 30 minutes of submitted visual material. Captions are highly recommended on all samples provided. *For further guidance on creating captions, reference [FWD-Doc Practices & Resources We Recommend](#).*

Director's Previous Work (optional, up to 200 words)

We encourage applicants to include a link to a previous work (any length or genre) by the director. Emerging filmmakers with no previous directing experience may also apply without a previous directing sample. Discuss the relevance of the work to the current project. If the current project is a departure from the previous work, how will this film differ?

Current Sample (up to 200 words)

What should reviewers be looking for in your sample? Explain what is present and absent in the sample, and how it will differ as a finished film. Describe how it is representative of the intended story, style, subject, or other aspect of the project.

- Development applicants are encouraged (but not required) to include visual material such as scene selects, teasers, pitch decks, or other edited footage (up to 15 minutes).
- Production applicants are required to submit a sample of at least 10 minutes, and encouraged to submit a sample between 10 to 20 minutes. The sample should demonstrate your access to characters, visual treatment, and the developing tone and style. We encourage applicants to submit a complete scene that provides the viewer insight into the team's ability to communicate their intention.
- Post-production applications require a sample of at least 20 minutes that demonstrates access to characters, story arc or concept, and visual treatment. If available, a rough cut may be submitted.