

2025 Indy Film Fest Submissions

Information for filmmakers about participating in our 22nd annual film festival.

DESCRIPTION

Indy Film Fest was founded in 2004 to celebrate the art of cinema and to create a shared experience around film in Indianapolis. We are a non-profit, international, independent film festival programming both features and shorts. Our all-volunteer staff strives to bring the best films the industry has to offer to our community from home and abroad. Our programmers aim to foster new talent and help filmmakers connect with the global industry. We are also dedicated to educating and developing audiences for international and independent cinema in Indy, screening the kind of innovative, visionary work that may not normally achieve distribution in this area.

Indy Film Fest is looking for the best independent features and shorts no matter the category or genre including: live action, animated, drama, comedy, narrative, documentary, horror, sci-fi, and experimental. Our annual festival spanning over 10+ days typically programs around 25 features and 100 short films, with over 90% from submissions.

Always growing and adapting, the Indy Film Fest began as the three-day Indianapolis International Film Festival in 2004. We quickly expanded to our current 10-day format in 2006, moved our festivities to the summer in 2009, changed our name to the Indy Film Fest in 2014, and since 2018 have been back home in our original spring timeframe. Due to COVID-19 our 2020 and 2021 festivals were primarily virtual and our 2022 - 2024 festivals were hybrid 5-day in-person festivals followed by virtual availability and concluding with award-winner in-person screenings on the final weekend. That format is our goal for the 2025 festival and before selection decisions are made filmmakers will be informed of any changes to dates or format and given the opportunity to request their submission fee be applied to a future festival if those changes are not acceptable.

Alumni of the Indy Film Fest (and Indianapolis International Film Festival) are eligible for a reasonable number of free submissions. Films with significant ties to Indiana are eligible for drastically reduced submission fees. Examples of eligibility include the director or writer being a current Indiana resident or native, or the film being primarily shot within Indiana. Please contact submissions@indyfilmfest.org to see if you are eligible for either of these opportunities.

AWARDS & PRIZES

The Indy Film Fest awards feature-length and short films in four categories - U.S. Fiction (“American Spectrum”), International (non-U.S.) Fiction (“World Cinema”), Documentary, and Indiana Films (“Hoosier Lens”). In each of these areas, a best short and feature-length film is recognized, as selected by the festival juries. Further, the festival presents an Audience Award for both a feature-length and short film in both fiction and non-fiction categories. We encourage you to submit to only one category.

ELIGIBILITY

1. Entrants must fully comply with these Entry Rules and Regulations in order to be considered eligible for acceptance to the 2025 Indy Film Fest.
2. Eligible films must have been completed during 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, or 2025.
3. Films with prior distribution or that have been exhibited publicly for profit in the central Indiana region prior to the 2025 Indy Film Fest are not eligible for juried awards.
4. Films with ongoing or infinite-run online distribution or availability (iTunes, Netflix, Hulu, etc.) are not eligible for juried awards. Films with finite or limited availability (i.e. an online-only film festival) or via independent distribution (i.e. filmmaker’s own website) remain eligible for juried awards.
5. Entries must be in English or have English subtitles.
6. Films must be available for screening as part of the Indy Film Fest in Spring, 2025.
7. Eligibility for the juried Hoosier Lens Short and Feature awards is at the discretion of the Indy Film Fest, and submissions to any category are potentially eligible. Considerations include filmmaker ties to Indiana such as long-term or current residence in Indiana as well as whether the film was shot or set in Indiana.
8. Films that have been submitted to previous editions of the Indy Film Fest should not be resubmitted unless there have been significant revisions or you have been invited to do so.

SUBMISSION POLICIES AND SELECTION PROCESSES

1. All films must be submitted via one of the methods listed at <https://indyfilmfest.org/submissions/>. Submissions to the discounted Indiana Short/Feature submission categories must be made through FilmFreeway.
2. The preferred method for screener submission is online via Vimeo or YouTube. Indy Film Fest must be supplied with current password through the end of the festival.
3. Entries without payment will not be considered.
4. Submission of entry is considered legal permission to screen your film during the festival upon acceptance.
5. Work in progress submissions are accepted, though such should be CLEARLY noted. Completed version must be received before final submission deadline in order to be considered for acceptance.
6. All submissions will be evaluated by at least two members of our screening team or one programmer, while most will be seen by at least three members of our team. We reserve the right to stop watching after 20 minutes or 50% of the runtime if we determine that the film does not meet minimal quality levels.
7. Films that require a screening fee for exhibition may be submitted and may be selected, but are not eligible for juried or audience awards. Screening fee requirements must be disclosed at time of submission, and may be taken into account for selection decisions.
8. Indy Film Fest does not have any premiere status requirements for selection.
9. Indy Film Fest or Indianapolis International Film Festival alumni are eligible for a reasonable number of submission waivers per year. Contact us at submissions@indyfilmfest.org to receive a waiver code, and include your film's name and the year it screened.
10. Films with significant ties to Indiana are eligible for drastically reduced submission fees. Examples of eligibility include the director or writer being a current Indiana resident or native, or the film being primarily shot within Indiana. Please contact submissions@indyfilmfest.org to see if you are eligible.

POLICIES UPON ACCEPTANCE

1. Accepted films will be notified via email at the submitter or contact address included in the submission form. Please ensure you can receive email from indyfilmfest.org as it is our primary mode of communication.

2. Filmmakers (or primary contact) will be required to submit a consent form ensuring an absence of any legal or rights issues, and indemnifying the Indy Film Fest of any liabilities that may arise out of screening with the festival.
3. Consent form contractually confirms the film for screening at the Indy Film Fest.
4. Upon acceptance, filmmakers (or primary contact) will provide the following by the dates specified by festival organizers:
 - Required: An exhibition version of the film in Quicktime with a resolution of at least 1080p, encoded using H.264 or ProRes.
 - Optional: DCPs may be supplied for in-person screenings of features and will be used when possible, but the above formats are required.
 - For jury and press purposes, an online digital version of exhibition version of the film must be available through the end of the festival.
 - Press materials as itemized in the Filmmaker Info & Consent Form that you will receive.
5. Filmmakers are responsible for shipping costs associated with delivering all materials to the Indy Film Fest. The Indy Film Fest may assume the cost of return shipping of exhibition copies following the run of the festival upon request.
6. The Indy Film Fest reserves the right to rescind acceptance of any film for any reason.

Should you have any questions regarding this process or your film's eligibility, please email submissions@indyfilmfest.org.

By submitting, artists agree to all terms set forth in category rules.

By submitting, filmmakers recognize that they are eligible for all appropriate prizes.

Entering your film is considered giving the Indy Film Fest permission to screen your film during the course of the festival. If, for some reason, after acceptance (but prior to the public announcement of the festival line-up) you choose not to screen with the Indy Film Fest, you must contact the festival immediately. Attempts to cancel a screening AFTER the official announcement cannot be acknowledged and the film will screen from the available copy on hand.

Indy Film Fest is hereby granted the right to utilize an excerpt from any film submitted and accepted for exhibition at the Festival for promotional purposes.

The submitter shall indemnify and hold harmless Indy Film Fest from and against any and all claims, liabilities, losses, damages, and expenses (including but not limited to attorney's fees, and costs of the court) which may be incurred by reason of any claim involving copyright, trademark, credits, publicity, screening, and loss of or damage to the screening videos entered.