



## AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT GRANT

### APPLICATION GUIDELINES

October 2025

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Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga The New Zealand Film Commission (**NZFC**) supports New Zealand-based filmmakers by providing support to their efforts in undertaking strategic activities that build audiences around the theatrical release of their feature films.

The Audience Engagement Fund is available for targeted work that mobilises and connects audiences with a film's release — such as community outreach, partnerships, and tailored initiatives (**Fund/Funding**). This Fund specifically supports activities that fall outside traditional marketing and print and advertising, including work with schools, cultural groups, or niche interest-based communities. It recognises the time, effort, and financial investment required to connect with audiences and aims to help films reach their full potential.

The Fund is being offered on a **trial basis**, and currently applies to theatrical release windows occurring between October 2025 and 30 April 2026, or are in active production during that period. The Fund will then be reviewed after the end of this period, and may be withdrawn. The NZFC will publish an announcement on its website after the end of the trial period as to whether the Audience Engagement Fund will continue to be available.

These guidelines are intended to help you deliver the strongest application possible. The Marketing team is available to discuss your eligibility before making an application. You may contact [marketing@nzfilm.co.nz](mailto:marketing@nzfilm.co.nz) if you have any questions.

#### WHO CAN APPLY

You are eligible to apply for this Fund if you meet **all** of the following criteria:

- you are a production company that:
  - is incorporated in New Zealand;
  - is trading in New Zealand; and

- has its central management and control in New Zealand; and
- you have received, or are currently receiving, feature film financing from the NZFC under a NZFC Investment Agreement (as defined in our Terms of Trade) for a film with a theatrical release date between 23<sup>rd</sup> October – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2026, or is in active production during that period.

**Note:** *A production company may only receive one Audience Engagement Grant per eligible film. Distributors cannot apply for this Fund.*

## WHAT THIS FUND CAN SUPPORT

Under this Fund, the NZFC offers a discretionary grant of up to \$60,000 to support activities that contribute to building audiences before and during the theatrical release window.

Production companies may choose to deliver the engagement activities themselves or contract professionals with relevant expertise.

Eligible costs include:

- “hard costs” such as bespoke marketing materials, social media advertising, travel, venue hire and community liaison fees;
- costs for contractors consultants, or agencies engaged by the production company (provided the activities those parties are undertaking align with, and contribute to, the proposed strategy and audience engagement goals); and
- administrative support costs, provided that support relates to the activities for the proposed strategy and audience engagement goals (and are not company overhead/administrative support costs relating to production or post production).

Retrospective applications will not be considered; that is, you cannot apply for Funding to cover costs you have already incurred.

**Note:** *You may apply for this Fund even if your film’s distributor is receiving other NZFC distribution funding (such as under Print & Advertising Grant or Audience+ Grant). This Fund is designed to complement the overall distribution strategy and should, where appropriate, be developed in partnership with the film’s distributor to avoid duplication of effort or funding.*

*If the distributor of the film is receiving (or applying for) NZFC funding under either the Print & Advertising Grant or the Audience+ Grant, support from this Fund must be used to target an audience that is **distinct and separate** from the audience targeted by those other grants.*

## HOW TO APPLY

You can apply via email according to the process below. The application window for this funding round closes 31<sup>st</sup> January 2026.

### APPLICATION PROCESS

Before you submit your application, please email [marketing@nzfilm.co.nz](mailto:marketing@nzfilm.co.nz) stating your interest in this Fund, the title of your film and the details of the production company and distributor (as applicable). Please make the subject line “Expression of Interest [Your name] –Audience Engagement Fund”.

If you are eligible for Funding, the NZFC Marketing Team will arrange a meeting with you to discuss your plans for audience engagement at least 15 weeks prior to your theatrical release date. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss your strategy and explain the type of information that will be useful for you to include in your application.

After meeting with the NZFC Marketing Team, you will then submit your application via email to [marketing@nzfilm.co.nz](mailto:marketing@nzfilm.co.nz). Applications must be no later than 30 April 2026.

Be sure to submit your expression of interest email ahead of time to allow sufficient time to meet with us and complete your application ahead of when you will require Funding.

### MATERIALS YOU MUST SUBMIT

In your application, you must identify the audience segments you intend to engage and describe the activities you intend to use the Funding for, and such activities should be designed to reach these groups in ways that are strategic, measurable, and culturally appropriate.

You should provide documentation that demonstrates the costs and activities planned. This may include:

- budget and timelines;
- details of audience engagement strategies;
- details of distribution plans; and/or
- a clear description of the target audience segments and how the proposed activities will engage them in meaningful ways, and (if applicable) how that target audience segment is **distinct and separate** from the audience segment targeted

under any Print & Advertising Grant or Audience+ Grant awarded (or currently being applied for) for the same film.

By submitting an application for this Fund, you agree to these Guidelines (except to the extent varied or waived by us) and our [Code of Conduct](#).

It's important you provide as much information in your application as you can to help us make a full and fair assessment. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

## **ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

The Fund is discretionary and competitive, meaning Funding is not guaranteed and will be awarded based on the strength of the application, alignment with the NZFC's priorities, and availability of Funding.

Strong applications will demonstrate clear audience insight, strategic planning, and alignment with the film's distribution goals, overarching strategy and the appropriate team and skills to deliver. The NZFC will consider your application's alignment with your film's overall distribution strategy.

The assessment criteria we apply to your application may change from time to time in the NZFC's sole discretion, but all decisions will be consistent with the New Zealand Film Commission Act 1978. Our decision is final.

## **ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

- Each application is assessed by our Marketing Team.
- We will notify you in writing of the outcome of your application.
- Applicants will be contacted as soon as possible after a decision is made.
- NZFC may request revisions or additional information before confirming approval.

## **WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU ARE A SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT**

If your application is successful, in order to receive the Funding, you will be required to enter into a grant agreement with the NZFC, setting out the terms on which you will receive the Funding. The payment of the Fund will be structured as follows, unless agreed otherwise:

- 60% of the Funding amount on signing of the grant agreement;
- 30% of the Funding amount on a progress check-in, six weeks prior to the film's theatrical release;

- 10% of the Funding amount upon submission and approval of final reporting and audience data to the NZFC.

## **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

If you are a successful applicant, you will be required to provide reports to the NZFC on the activities undertaken, outcomes achieved, and provide audience data where possible. The final report may include audience data such as ticket sales, attendance figures, social media engagement, or survey feedback. Reporting requirements will be set out in greater detail in the grant agreement, or otherwise communicated to you by the NZFC.

If engagement activities need to be adjusted after the Funding is approved, these changes must be reflected in the final report. Any cost differences for the activities undertaken should be clearly outlined in a proposed budget vs actual budget comparison. The NZFC understands that plans may evolve and encourages transparency in documenting these changes.

The final report must be submitted within three months after the film's theatrical release.

## **BRANDING AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

You will be required to comply with the NZFC's [Style and Accreditation Guidelines](#) as part of your film's release (or as otherwise agreed by the NZFC under the NZFC Investment Agreement).

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

We will use reasonable efforts to keep the information you provide confidential. Please note that any information you give to us can be requested under the Official Information Act 1982. If we get such a request, we can talk to you before responding.

You are encouraged to read these guidelines carefully as they are intended to help you deliver the strongest application possible.

**If you have any further questions, please email us at [marketing@nzfilm.co.nz](mailto:marketing@nzfilm.co.nz)**