



FILM DISTRIBUTION GRANTS GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

September 2025

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Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga The New Zealand Film Commission (NZFC) supports New Zealand films by providing support for activities that elevate the theatrical release of their feature films. The NZFC want as many people as possible to see the great New Zealand films that have been made with the NZFC's support.

The NZFC offers four grants (together called the **Film Distribution Grants**) to assist with the theatrical release of NZFC-funded films in New Zealand. The four grants available are: the **Print & Advertising (P&A) Grant**, the **Audience+ Grant**, the **Regional Grant** and the **Premiere Grant**.

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 if you have any questions.

WHO CAN APPLY

You are eligible to apply for any of the Film Distribution Grants if you are an established distributor attached to a film that has received, or is currently receiving, funding under a NZFC Investment Agreement (as defined in our [Terms of Trade](#)) from the New Zealand Film Commission (NZFC) for the production of a film. The film you are attached to must have a theatrical release that meets these minimum requirements:

- the film must be programmed to screen in at least five cinemas across two main centres in New Zealand;
- the film must screen for at least one paid session a day for seven consecutive days; and
- the film must have an industry standard release window.



WHAT THIS FUND CAN SUPPORT

Each Film Distribution Grant supports different activities, and offers different amounts of funding, as set out below:

- The **Print & Advertising (P&A) Grant** offers a discretionary grant of up to \$50,000 to cover up to 25% of the total print and/or advertising spend for the theatrical release of the film.
- The **Audience+ Grant** offers a discretionary grant of up to \$15,000 to cover up to 50% of the total spend on promotions or advertising of the film to reach target audiences who are not regular cinemagoers and/or those who are regular cinemagoers but not for New Zealand films.
- The **Regional Grant** offers a discretionary grant of up to \$10,000 to cover up to 70% of the total spend on promotions or advertising of the film in regional areas, to support regional marketing aspects of the main release campaign. The **Regional Grant** could be used for cinemas in regional areas to design and create activities that will engage their local community and create word-of-mouth advertising about your film.
- The **Premiere Grant** offers a flat grant of \$5,000 which must be put towards the cost of your film's New Zealand premiere.

You may apply for one, or any combination of the Film Distribution Grants for your film, to the extent the audiences targeted under each grant do not overlap. For example, if you are applying for the **Regional Grant** to target a regional audience segment, you cannot also apply for the **Audience+ Grant** to target the same regional audience segment.


WHAT THIS FUND CANNOT SUPPORT

The Film Distribution Grants are for the distribution of NZFC-funded feature films in New Zealand cinemas. This means you cannot apply for costs incurred overseas, except for the freight to and from Australia of master materials associated with preparing the release materials. These freight costs must not exceed \$500, and must be included in the budget supplied when applying for the **Print & Advertising (P&A) Grant**.

Costs that cannot be included in your release budget and which will not be eligible for any of the grants include:

- sub-distributor and/or theatrical Booker fees;
- DCP creation;



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- company overhead costs including in-house publicists, advertising-bookers or social media strategists;
 - items that would be considered part of a standard delivery schedule e.g. press kits, stills photography;
 - advertising placement fees; or
 - speakers' fees.

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

Please note a requirement of the grants is that the territories of Australia and New Zealand are not cross collateralised. If the New Zealand cinematic release results in a deficit, the NZFC will, on a case-by-case basis allow cross-collateralisation with Australia.

You must confirm with the production company whether they intend to apply for an **Audience Engagement Grant** for the same film you are seeking a **Film Distribution Grant** for. If they are applying, you must disclose this in your application. The audience segment you propose to target with the Film Distribution Grant must be **distinct and separate** from the audience segment the production company is targeting with the Audience Engagement Grant.

Similarly, if the production company is applying for a **Marketing Materials Grant**, you must also note this in your application. You cannot use Film Distribution Grant funding to create, develop, or produce marketing assets that are already being supported by a Marketing Materials Grant.

HOW TO APPLY

You can apply by emailing your application to marketing@nzfilm.co.nz. We recommend you get in touch with the NZFC Marketing Team prior to submitting your application, so you have the opportunity to discuss your application with the NZFC as you put it together. You can contact the NZFC Marketing Team via email, or phone 0800 659 754.


Applications must be submitted at least six weeks prior to your film's planned theatrical release date.

MATERIALS YOU MUST SUBMIT

In your application you must include the following:

- the theatrical release plan, and which Film Distribution Grant(s) you are applying for;



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- a statement covering whether the production company intends to apply for the Audience Engagement Grant or the Marketing Materials Grant in respect of the film you are applying for a Film Distribution Grant for;
 - an outline of your primary and secondary audience, and how you plan to engage with them (and, if applicable, how your audiences are distinct and separate from the audience segment the production company intends to target with support from the Audience Engagement Grant in respect of your film);
 - the proposed budget (a template outlining the costs the grant can cover is part of the application form);
 - the marketing/publicity strategy;
 - a breakdown of any advertising spend;
 - the list of cinemas the film will screen in;
 - box office expectations; and
 - comparative titles and their New Zealand box office figures.

By submitting an application for a Film Distribution Grant, 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 Film Distribution Grants are discretionary and contestable, meaning funding for each the grants is not guaranteed. Each grant will be awarded based on the strength of the application, alignment with the NZFC's priorities, and availability of funding for the grants.


The size of the relevant grant will be considered in relation to your distribution plans and prospects for the film. We expect that the grant amount or the total grant amount (if several grants are applied for) will be commensurate with the anticipated New Zealand box office figures.

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

- Once the NZFC receives your application, it will be assessed to see if you and the film are eligible for the grant; if ineligible, you'll be notified by email. Each application is assessed by the NZFC Marketing Team.



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- You will be advised of a decision via email within three weeks after the date you submitted your application.
 - NZFC may request revisions or additional information before confirming approval of your application.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU ARE A SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT

If your application is successful, in order to receive the relevant grant(s), you will be required to enter into a grant agreement with the NZFC, setting out the terms on which you will receive the grant.

The payment of the **Print & Advertising (P&A) Grant**, **Audience+ Grant** and **Regional Grant** will be structured as follows, unless agreed otherwise:

- 50% of the grant amount on signing the grant agreement, subject to the NZFC's receipt of a satisfactory invoice from you; and
- up to 50% of the grant amount, as calculated below, on (i) receipt of an actual vs budgeted report on the cost of the release of the film and (ii) a royalty report for the theatrical release window for the film, subject to the NZFC's receipt of a satisfactory invoice from you for the applicable amount.


The second payment (being up to 50% of the grant amount) will be calculated according to the actual vs budgeted report as follows:

- if your actual spend is less than the proposed spend, the second payment amount will be calculated based on your actual spend;
- if your actual spend is more than your proposed spend, the second payment amount will be calculated based on your proposed spend; and
- in the unlikely event that your actual spend is below 50% of the proposed spend, we may require you to refund part or all of the first payment.

Under your grant agreement, you will be required to provide the NZFC with certain reports. The details of these reporting requirements will be set out in greater detail in the grant agreement, or otherwise communicated to you by the NZFC.

To receive the second payment, the NZFC must receive all required reports within three months after the completion of the film's theatrical release in New Zealand. Should these reports not be received within this timeframe, subsequent applications for a Film Distribution Grant may not be accepted. We recognise that multiple releases may take place within a short period and we may take this into account.





The payment of the **Premiere Grant** will be made on signing of the grant agreement and the NZFC's receipt of a satisfactory invoice from you. If you receive the **Premiere Grant** you will provide an agreed number of complimentary tickets to the premiere to the NZFC.

Please note that if you are successful in receiving any of the grants, to the extent costs are supported by the grants, such costs cannot be recouped by you as expenses under the terms of the distribution agreement and/or a recoupment schedule.

BRANDING AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

You will be required to comply with the NZFC's [Style and Accreditation Guidelines](#) as part of your film's release.

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.

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

<p>If you have any further questions, please email us at marketing@nzfilm.co.nz</p>
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Change log: These Guidelines were updated September 2025 from the Guidelines dated August 2020.

