



New Zealand
FILM COMMISSION



Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

New Zealand Film Commission

Film Distribution Grants Guidelines for Applicants

June 2025

Please review these guidelines carefully to ensure you submit a strong application. Note that the ongoing support timeline is a mandatory requirement. If you are unable to meet it, contact us promptly by email marketing@nzfilm.co.nz



Introduction

The Film Distribution Grants support the New Zealand release of feature films funded by the New Zealand Film Commission (NZFC), helping them reach wider audiences and maximise their local impact through discretionary funding and support.

Who can apply

Eligible applicants are distributors representing films that have received NZFC Development Grant, Production Financing, Post-Production Funding, or the Feature Film Finishing Grant.

Distribution Grant overview

The NZFC offers four discretionary grants to support the release of NZFC-funded films. To qualify as a theatrical release, a film must be programmed to screen in at least 10 cinemas across five main centers. The four distribution grants are:

- **Print & Advertising (P&A) Grant:** Funding must be for the print and/or advertising spend for the theatrical release of the film.
 - Covers up to 25% of print and/or advertising spend.
- **Audience+ Grant:** Funding must target non-regular cinemagoers OR regular cinemagoers for films not from New Zealand.
 - Covers up to 50% of eligible spend.
 - Capped at \$20,000.00 NZD
- **Regional Grant:** Funding to support promotional activities specifically targeted audiences in regional New Zealand.
 - Covers up to 70% of the total eligible spend.
 - Capped at \$15,000.00 NZD
- **Premiere Grant:**
 - Fixed contribution toward the New Zealand premiere of the film.
 - The amount and allocation are at the NZFC's discretion and will be assessed in relation to the film's distribution strategy, plans, and the overall application.

Important: Poster and Trailer Grants are separate from Distribution Grants and must be submitted directly by the filmmakers. For more information, please contact marketing@nzfilm.co.nz



How to apply

Email your application to marketing@nzfilm.co.nz

All funding decisions are discretionary and will be based on your distribution plans and the film's prospects. Decisions are final. The criteria applied may change from time to time, but all decisions will be consistent with the New Zealand Film Commission Act 1978.

Applicants must follow the ongoing support timeline. If you are unable to meet key dates or deadlines, contact the marketing team as soon as possible. We recommend staying in regular contact with the marketing team throughout the distribution planning process.

Application Requirements

All applications must include the following mandatory components:

1. **Release Plan:** Provide the anticipated New Zealand release date, cinema partners and locations, and the screening schedule.
2. **Audience Engagement:** Outline primary and secondary target audiences, engagement tactics, and promotional activities.
3. **Distribution and Marketing Budget:** Submit a completed Distribution and Marketing Budget using the official NZFC template spreadsheet. Use of the approved NZFC template is required.
4. **Marketing and Publicity Strategy:** Detail marketing channels, advertising plan and budget, content strategy, PR campaign, campaign timeline, box office expectations, and comparative box office figures in New Zealand.

Assessment and Decision Process

Applications will be assessed for eligibility. Eligible applications will receive a decision within two weeks. The NZFC may request additional information, which could extend the decision timeframe. You will be informed of the outcome of your submission via email.



Ongoing support timeline

To support a successful application and effective distribution plan, the NZFC expects applicants to engage at the following key stages. These points of engagement may be adjusted at NZFC's discretion.

1. Initial Consultation (Pre-Application)

- Purpose: Discuss theatrical release plans with NZFC marketing team.
- Timing: At least 8 weeks prior to planned release date.

Note: Applications are only eligible following this consultation.

2. Application Review Meeting

- Purpose: Review your submitted application and provide feedback, if required.
- Timing: Within 2 weeks of submission.

3. Pre-Release Check-In

- Purpose: Assess distribution progress and adjust strategies if needed.
- Timing: 3 weeks prior to release.

4. Post-Release Review and Reporting

- Purpose: Submit your final report and participate in a review meeting.
- Timing: 3 months after release.

Important: Submissions will not be accepted within 2 weeks of the planned release date. Ensure you allow adequate time for consultation and review. Adhering to this timeline is a mandatory condition unless otherwise agreed with the NZFC.



What you cannot apply for

NZFC Distribution Grants support the release of NZFC-funded feature films in New Zealand cinemas. Funding is not available for costs incurred outside New Zealand, with one exception:

- Freight of master materials to and from Australia may be included, capped at NZ\$500. These costs must be detailed in your submitted budget.

The following costs are not eligible for funding and should not be included in your budget:

- Sub-distributor or theatrical Booker fees
- DCP creation
- Company overheads, including in-house publicists, advertising bookers, or social media strategists
- Items covered in a standard delivery schedule (e.g. press kits, stills photography)
- Advertising placement fees
- Speakers' fees

Retroactive applications will not be accepted. You cannot apply for funding to cover costs already incurred.

Important: A condition of this grant is that the territories of Australia and New Zealand must not be cross-collateralised. However, if the New Zealand cinematic release results in a deficit, the NZFC may consider allowing cross-collateralisation with Australia on a case-by-case basis.



Next steps

If your application is successful, grants will be paid as follows:

P&A Grant, Audience Plus Grant and Regional Grant

- 50% of the approved grant amount will be paid upon approval of your application.
- The remaining 50% will be paid after the NZFC receives and approves the following:
 - An actual vs. budgeted cost report for the release
 - A report detailing all promotional and marketing activity undertaken
 - A royalty report covering the New Zealand theatrical release period

Payment Adjustments:

- If your actual spend is less than the proposed budget, the final payment will be adjusted accordingly.
- If your actual spend is more than the proposed budget, the final payment will still be based on the proposed amount.
- If your actual spend is less than 50% of the proposed budget, you may be required to refund part or all of the initial payment.

Report Submission Deadline:

- All required reports must be submitted within three months of the conclusion of the film's New Zealand theatrical release.
- Failure to submit reports in a timely manner may affect eligibility for future distribution support. We understand that multiple releases may occur in close succession and will take this into account when reviewing reporting timelines.

Premiere Grant

- The full Premiere Grant amount will be paid upon approval of your application.
- The distributor must provide the NZFC with an agreed number of complimentary tickets to the New Zealand premiere.

A final reminder that if you have any questions, please contact the NZFC Marketing Team by email marketing@nzfilm.co.nz or phone 0800 659 754.
