



**New Zealand**  
FILM COMMISSION



Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

# Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga New Zealand Film Commission

in partnership with



## The Black List New Zealand Project

Script Development Workshop with  
the Black List and  
NZFC Development Financing

## Guidelines for Applicants

January 2021

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

Please also read the relevant information sheets on the NZFC website (*[Development Grant Agreement Information Sheet](#)* and *[New Zealand Content Information Sheet](#)*)

Please feel free to get in touch before making an application, as we can offer helpful advice and guidance – [blnzp@nzfilm.co.nz](mailto:blnzp@nzfilm.co.nz)

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## Introduction

The New Zealand Film Commission Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga (NZFC) is committed to ensuring New Zealand has a successful screen industry.

We are here to help people in the industry make films that are high impact, authentic and culturally significant. We want to support a diverse range of narrative feature films that will attract audiences here and overseas and further the careers of the filmmakers and the production companies behind them.

## The Black List New Zealand Project Overview

The NZFC has partnered with the Black List™ to introduce the Black List New Zealand Project (BLNZP). This is a one-off fund, designed to foster the creative relationship between writers and producers and stimulate international opportunities for New Zealand feature films. Additionally, the NZFC hopes to cast a wide net for screenwriting talent and connect with projects at various stages of development. BLNZP will support the development of six quality, unique and exciting feature film scripts, with the potential of attracting the US and global market.


The Black List will review all scripts submitted to the BLNZP and compile a shortlist of 20 scripts based on the assessment criteria outlined in these guidelines. A panel consisting of NZFC staff and a Black List representative (the BLNZP Panel) will then select six successful projects from the shortlist. The six selected projects will take part in a professional development workshop and mentorship series with the Black List and receive up to NZ\$25,000 in NZFC Development Financing to complete the next draft of their script.

Every script submitted to BLNZP will receive assessment notes from the Black List.

The aims of the BLNZP are to:

- Foster key creative relationships between writers and producers.
- Support the professional development of New Zealand filmmakers by giving them an understanding of the US market through working with creative mentors and screen industry executives.
- Give New Zealand screenwriters access to high value script assessments of an international standard, offering tangible and constructive feedback.
- Enable six filmmaker teams to create the next draft of their scripts with NZFC Development Financing of up to NZ\$25,000.

BLNZP will accept applications from writer/producer teams, or individual writers. Please see *Who Can Apply* in these guidelines for further details.



Your application must be completed online through the NZFC application portal. The NZFC application portal will open on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and close at 1pm on **19<sup>th</sup> March 2021**. No late applications will be accepted. Final decisions will be announced in May 2021.

## The Black List™

The Black List is an annual survey of Hollywood executives' favourite unproduced screenplays and was founded in 2005 by [Franklin Leonard](#). Since then, more than 400 Black List scripts have been produced, grossing over \$29 billion in box office worldwide. Black List movies have won 54 Academy Awards from 267 nominations, including four of the last twelve Best Picture Oscars and eleven of the last 28 Best Screenplay Oscars.

In October of 2012, the Black List launched a unique online community where screenwriters could make their work available to readers, buyers, and employers. Since its inception, it has hosted more than 70,000 screenplays and teleplays and provided more than 120,000 script evaluations. As a direct result of introductions made on the Black List, dozens of writers have found representation at major talent agencies and management companies, as well as sold or optioned their screenplays.

The Black List's screenwriting labs - including their annual lab, women's feature lab and episodic labs - were created to foster emerging writing talent. Each year, writers are invited to workshop their scripts and learn from working industry professionals. In the Black List Lab programs, the participants workshop their screenplay and take part in one-on-one sessions with working professional screenwriting mentors. Additionally, they attend a series of virtual panels and events that further expose them to the realities of life as a professional screenwriter. Previous Lab mentors have included Phyllis Nagy (CAROL), Scott Neustader (THE DISASTER ARTIST), Stephany Folsom (TOY STORY 4), Andrew Ahn (DRIVEWAYS), Chris Weitz (ROGUE ONE), Victoria Strouse (FINDING DORY), and Kiwi Smith (LEGALLY BLONDE).


Black List Lab alumni have gone on to be represented by major agencies and management companies. Minhal Baig's feature film HALA debuted at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival, where it was Apple's first film acquisition. Jimmy Keyrouz's BROKEN KEYS was an Official Selection at the 2020 Cannes Film Festival. Paul da Silva's TRAUMA CENTER, starring Bruce Willis, was released theatrically in December 2019, and is now streaming on Hulu. Additionally, two writers have had scripts featured on the Annual Black List: Tom Dean (TIME TRAVELERS LA RONDE, 2016 Black List) and Noga Pnueli (MEET CUTE, 2018 Black List). Several writers have transitioned into television and are staffed on various programs, including Gia Gordon ("Bull"), Dagny Looper ("Strange Angel"), and Jean Pesce ("Brave New World").

## BLNZP Timeline

Submission Deadline (19 Mar 2021)	Assessment (19 Mar - 23 Apr 2021)	Selection Process (23 Apr - mid-May 2021)	Workshop (31 May - 25 Jun 2021) & Funding
Applications must be submitted through the portal to NZFC by 1pm on the 19th of March 2021. Late applications will not be accepted.	Every script submitted to the BLNZP will be passed on to the Black List where they will be assessed by a Black List assessor.	<p>The Black List will compile a shortlist of 20 scripts. The BLNZP panel will select the top six and NZFC will inform applicants of the outcome.</p> <p>The Black List's assessment notes will be sent to every applicant after the selection process is complete.</p> <p>If you are selected as an individual, NZFC and industry organisations will offer support in finding a producer should you so wish.</p>	<p>The top six teams will be matched with a creative mentor by the Black List, and attend a workshop run by the Black List over four weeks. Teams will have three mentoring sessions across the four weeks.</p> <p>NZFC staff will begin the contracting process with each of the six teams to receive their Development Grant of up to \$25,000. The timing of tranches will be tied to agreed deliverables.</p>

## The Black List Assessment and Workshop Conditions

In applying for the BLNZP you must acknowledge and agree that the NZFC will share your submitted script, and potentially any other relevant creative material provided as part of your application, with the Black List for the purpose of the Black List completing script assessments. Additionally, if your application is successful, you agree to your contact information being shared with the Black List for the purposes of coordinating the workshop and mentorship series.



One of the services the Black List offers is the opportunity for writers to have their scripts hosted on the Black List website, where screen professionals can read and provide ratings on the scripts. If you are interested in gaining access to this service and having your script (or any of your other scripts) hosted on the Black List website, you may be able to use this service outside of applying for BLNZP. In doing so, you will be required to agree to the Black List's terms and conditions, which differ from those that apply to the BLNZP. If you would like more information on this, please visit [the Black List website](#).

## Development Financing Conditions

NZFC Development Financing is provided as a grant, which does not need to be repaid unless you breach certain terms of the Development Grant Agreement. Because grants are subject to GST, if you are GST registered, GST will be added to the grant when it is paid. For more information see the [Development Grant Agreement information sheet](#).

To be accountable for public money entrusted to us, the NZFC must be able to verify what has happened as a result of any loan or grant. Certain reports and updated documentation will therefore be required, in particular, you will be required to report back to the NZFC on what you have done with the money. It is important for you to meet your reporting obligations. Should you be successful with the BLNZP, these obligations will be outlined in your Development Grant Agreement.

You will be considered ineligible for funding if you have outstanding reports or deliverables relating to other NZFC funding or are in breach of any contract with NZFC.

Note that your project does not have to get NZFC Development Financing for it to be eligible for other NZFC Production Financing.

While receiving NZFC Development Financing recognises the potential of your project, it does not imply an ongoing commitment to future NZFC financing. Projects that get Development Financing cannot count on further grants and each application is considered on its own merits.

Investment is discretionary, and decisions are final. The criteria applied when making financing decisions may change from time to time, but decisions will be consistent with the New Zealand Film Commission Act 1978.



# The Stages of The Black List New Zealand Project

## Stage One: Assessment

The BLNZP has two steps in the assessment process.

### Step 1: Script Assessment

The Black List will assess each script against the assessment criteria outlined in these guidelines. Their assessments will be based on the script's merits alone. The Black List will then compile a shortlist of 20 scripts and provide this list to the NZFC along with individual script assessments for all applications. More information about what the Black List are looking for in your script can be found in these guidelines under *What to include in your application*.

### Step 2: Top Six Selection

The BLNZP Panel will assess the 20 shortlisted projects. During this process, the script assessments provided by the Black List, supporting cultural assessments (where applicable), and other application materials will be considered in order to select the six successful projects.

The NZFC's commitment to Tangata Whenua under [Te Rautaki](#) is to work in partnership with Māori to better support the development and progression of Māori talent. The NZFC is also committed to providing opportunities and support for those from diverse and/or underrepresented communities. Decisions made through the BLNZP will reflect these commitments.

When the BLNZP Panel decision has been announced, all projects will receive their two written assessments from the Black List, via the NZFC, ending Stage One.


## Stage Two: The Workshop and Mentorship Series

The Black List will host the filmmakers from each of the six selected projects for a virtual workshop and mentorship series over the course of a month.

### The Schedule

The workshop and mentorship series will consist of five panel sessions (as outlined below) and three mentoring sessions, held over the course of four weeks. The series will begin with an introductory overview session with [Scott Myers](#). The program will lay the groundwork to understand the US entertainment industry, both film and television, with a series of panels on the studio system, the independent world, the television market, and representation (agents and managers).

The five panel sessions will cover each of the following areas:

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1. Introduction with Scott Myers
  2. The US streaming market
  3. The US Studio System
  4. The US Indie World with independent producers
  5. Representation in the US (agents and managers)

## The Mentors

Previous Black List creative mentors have included Oscar winning screenwriter Graham Moore (THE IMITATION GAME), Oscar nominated writers Eric Heisserer (ARRIVAL) and Billy Ray (CAPTAIN PHILLIPS), Max Borenstein (GODZILLA), Jessica Bendinger (BRING IT ON), Kiwi Smith (10 THINGS I HATE ABOUT YOU), Beau Willimon (HOUSE OF CARDS), Kelly Marcel (FIFTY SHADES OF GREY) and Craig Mazin (CHERNOBYL), among others.


Additional guests may be invited to attend the workshop from the Black List's extensive list of industry partners, such as Apple, Amazon, Bad Robot, Disney / Fox, Lionsgate, Netflix, Paramount, Sony, and Warner Bros.

The creative mentors for the workshop and mentorship series will be confirmed closer to the time of the workshop.

## Who Can Apply

To be eligible for the BLNZP you must be over 18 years of age, a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident, and your film must have significant New Zealand content as defined by the Film Commission Act 1978. See the [\*New Zealand Content information sheet\*](#) for more detail.

- If the project has a producer attached, the producer must be the lead applicant.
- If you are a writer that does not have a producer attached to your project, you may be the lead applicant.
- If there is a director attached to the project, they should be named in the application and may participate in the workshop and mentorship series if the project is selected.
- Writer/directors can apply.
- A producer can be associated with up to two applications if both scripts have a different writer.
- A writer can be associated with two different producers with two different scripts or can submit up to two scripts as an individual in separate applications.
- The person named as the producer in your application can be the same person as the writer if they have teamed up with an additional writer or producer.



Please see *Producer attachment for the BLNZP* below.

An application can be made in an individual capacity or in the name of a company. If the application is being made in the name of a company, it must be a New Zealand company; that is, the company must be incorporated and carrying out business in New Zealand, and its central management and control must be held by New Zealand citizens or permanent residents.

If your project is a co-production, it must have a proportion of significant New Zealand content and an experienced producer who is a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident. Development Financing is generally only provided for New Zealand-based and/or New Zealander-specific development costs. Find out more about co-productions on the NZFC website [www.nzfilm.co.nz/international-productions/co-productions](http://www.nzfilm.co.nz/international-productions/co-productions).

You must hold or share intellectual property rights for your project. Read the [\*Chain of Title information sheet\*](#) and [\*Rautaki Māori\*](#) regarding Māori cultural representations for more detail.

You cannot apply for the BLNZP if you have any outstanding obligations to the NZFC.

## **Producer Attachment for the BLNZP**

Ideally, a New Zealand producer will be attached to the project, and the producer will be the person making the application to the BLNZP. However, you may apply, attend the workshop and mentorship series, and be eligible to receive NZFC Development Financing from the BLNZP with or without a producer attached.

If you are a writer that does not have a producer attached and your project is selected, the NZFC will offer a process for finding a producer, in conjunction with the Screen Production and Development Association (SPADA) and New Zealand Writers Guild (NZWG). As part of this process and where required, we will also consult with appropriate industry organisations such as Ngā Aho Whakaari, the Pan-Asian Screen Collective, Women in Film and Television and Pacific Islands Screen Artists.


In supporting the ongoing development of your project, and the aims of the BLNZP, it is strongly encouraged that you enter the workshops as a team, so you can take best advantage of the workshop and mentoring process, but it is not compulsory.

## **What You Can Apply For**

In applying to the BLNZP, you are applying for all of the following:

- Assessment of your feature film script by the Black List's assessors;
- To attend a virtual Workshop and Mentorship series designed and hosted by the Black List; and
- NZFC Development Financing of up to NZ\$25,000.





You can only apply for actual and reasonable costs involved in the development of your project. There is a detailed list in the section on *What to include in your application*.

## What You Cannot Apply For

NZFC Development Financing under the BLNZP is not available for:

- initial option payments;
- treatments;
- short film development;
- television programme development or production;
- development or production of any film intended to run at a duration of less than 90 minutes;
- capital works or acquisitions;
- equipment purchases; or
- projects that are part of formal academic assessment.

Retrospective applications will not be considered; you cannot apply for financing to cover costs you have already incurred.

## How to Apply

You must apply using the online application portal at <https://funding.nzfilm.co.nz/>. Search for the 'Black List New Zealand Project' and click 'New Application'. The form will take you step by step through the application process and prompt you to provide all the information required.

If you are using the online application portal for the first time you will need to sign up for a new account. Please be aware there can be up to a 24 hour wait while the NZFC sets up your account, although in most cases the wait will be much shorter.

The deadline for applications to be submitted is 19 March 2021 and must be submitted by 1pm on the day. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

The NZFC advises you allow plenty of time to complete your application.

## We Are Here to Help

These guidelines are intended to help you deliver the strongest application possible. You are welcome to discuss your project with the Development and Production Team if you have any outstanding questions.

To contact us email [blnzp@nzfilm.co.nz](mailto:blnzp@nzfilm.co.nz) or phone 0800 659 754.



# What to Include in Your Application

Your application **must** include the following sections:

1. Creative material
2. Project background including IP rights
3. Key personnel

Your application may also include the following **OPTIONAL** supporting material

1. Development timeline
2. Development budget

## 1. Creative Material

### Logline

The logline is a statement, in 35 words or less, that reflects the narrative 'hook', premise or essential dramatic dilemma inherent in the proposed film. This is not a tagline for a movie poster, but rather a one or two-line summary of the film's essential storyline.

Keep in mind that the title and sometimes the logline of all projects funded by the NZFC will be published. If you want to keep any details confidential please let us know and provide another version for publication.

### Short Synopsis

The short synopsis is a highly condensed story outline that clearly reflects the dramatic spine of the film. It must touch on the film's tone, genre, emotional journey, key characters, and include details of the film's ending. For the BLNZP application this should be no more than 500 words.

### Draft Script

Your draft script of the proposed film should be between 90 to 120 pages presented in industry standard 12 pt. courier font. If your script contains a language other than English, please provide a full translation of these sections for the benefit of the assessors.

You will have done a certain amount of 'spec' work before making this application. It is expected your script demonstrates that your great idea is already well on the way to becoming a compelling feature length story, and scripts at any stage of development are welcome.



## What the Black List are looking for in your script

The Black List will assess your script based on the strengths of the five script elements listed below. These five elements will form the basis of a subjective rating on a scale of 1-10, which will in turn determine how the Black List choose the 20 projects for the short list. They are:

- Premise
- Plot
- Characters
- Dialogue
- Setting

## What the BLNZP Panel are looking for in your creative material

Your logline, synopsis and script will be assessed against the following questions:

- Is the premise strong, distinct, and original?
- Does the story convey an emotional journey?
- Does this project have the potential to become a film that is distinctive, high impact and authentic?
- Does it have the potential to be culturally significant?
- Does it have the potential to achieve critical acclaim?
- Does it have the potential to achieve commercial success, attracting larger audiences to New Zealand films?

## 2. Background

### Short project history including rights and previous funding

The project history should include the origins of the project, history of previous scripts or other creative development, and any past creative participants.

You must include details of all the money you have spent on developing your project so far, whether self-funded or not, including any previously received NZFC Development Financing, NZWG Seed Grant, He Ara Funding or, in the case of a proposed co-production, money from other financing bodies.

You need to warrant that you have secured the necessary IP rights to develop the script and explain any underlying rights. For more information on rights please see the [\*Chain of Title\*](#)



*information sheet.*

You will not be required to submit documentation evidencing you have the necessary rights to develop the script, however the NZFC reserves the right to ask further questions and/or request documentation for review and approval prior to releasing any of the NZFC Development Financing.

### **Other NZFC Financing or Support**

If your project has a producer attached, and the producer has any outstanding reports or deliverables relating to any other NZFC grants, loans, or equity, they should be delivered before, or alongside, this application. Note that you will be considered ineligible for funding if you have outstanding reports or deliverables or you are in breach of any existing contract with the NZFC.

#### **What the BLNZP Panel are looking for in your background information**

- Context to help understand how your team has been working together on the project.
- Have you fulfilled your obligations in relation to any other NZFC funding?
- How has any previous NZFC Development Financing been used to successfully advance the project?
- What has happened as a result of previous NZFC funding support?

### **3. Key Personnel**

#### **Bios of key people**

Please provide a brief biography highlighting experience relevant to the application (no more than one paragraph each) for all team members attached at the time of application. Remember, you may apply as an individual and in this case, you only need to provide your own bio.

#### **What the BLNZP Panel are looking for in your key personnel**

The potential and experience of the team. This information may also be used for marketing purposes if your application is successful



## Optional Application Materials

Please note, if your application is successful, you will need to provide NZFC with both of these documents. NZFC staff will be able to help you if required.

### 1. Development Budget

You are applying for a grant (of up to \$25,000) to cover the actual and reasonable development costs of your project. Your budget is where you set out what you expect these costs to be. Please remember that you cannot apply for funding to cover costs you have already incurred.

The costs that you can include in your budget are:

- writer fees – the New Zealand Writers Guild rates are a good guide;
- producer fees;
- script consultant fees;
- script assessments;
- director fees (on projects where the writer is also the director you should not include a separate fee);
- script-related research costs;
- limited travel costs (for example where all team members do not live in the same city);
- legal costs;
- extensions to rights costs; and
- direct script and project-related overheads such as printing, couriers, phone etc.

### 2. Proposed Development Timeline

This should set out your proposed timeline including the start and finish dates of the development work you are seeking support for, and any other milestones or dates you feel are relevant. Please remember to incorporate the workshop and mentorship series in your timeline.

As part of NZFC Development Financing you are required to provide any deliverables, which will be outlined in your funding agreement, to the NZFC by a certain date. This date should be reflected in your timeline. (see the NZFC [\*Development Grant Agreement information sheet\*](#) for more on reporting requirements).

#### **What the BLNZP Panel are looking for in your optional development budget and timeline**

- Is the development budget realistic?
- Is the development timeline realistic and achievable?
- Does your timeline account for the workshop and mentoring process with the Black List?



## What Happens to Your Application?

Once your application is received, it will be assessed by the NZFC for eligibility and to ensure that all required information is included. You will be notified via email if your application is ineligible.

If your application is deemed to be eligible, you will be notified via email. Following this, the Black List will review each script and provide two individual script assessments. 20 scripts will be shortlisted, and the Black List assessments, along with the other application materials, will be considered by the BLNZP Panel. The BLNZP Panel will make the final selection of the six successful projects.

During the panel stage, and at any other stage where relevant, an additional assessor with appropriate cultural knowledge and/or experience associated with an under-represented community may be engaged to provide valuable objective insight (Cultural Assessor). For example, if your project has Māori content or characters, the NZFC will seek an independent perspective considering our Te Rautaki Māori guidelines.

Please note that by submitting your application to the BLNZP, you acknowledge and agree that your application will be reviewed by external assessors, and you also accept that the identity of any particular assessor(s) used to assess your application will be kept strictly confidential to the Black List and NZFC and will not be released.

As the BLNZP is a one-off project, it is not bound by the standard rules for reapplication:

- If declined for the BLNZP, you can apply for NZFC Early Development Funding with no time constraint attached, and the BLNZP application will not count towards the two declined applications maximum per project.
- If you have previously applied for NZFC Development Financing for this project, you can still apply for the BLNZP without it affecting the standard number of applications per project, and you do not have to wait for six months from your previous application.
- If you do go on to apply for Development Financing with this project outside of the BLNZP, your project will then become bound by the standard Development Financing terms and conditions, excluding the application to the BLNZP.

The NZFC will use reasonable efforts to maintain the confidentiality of the information provided by the applicant. Please note that any information you provide to the NZFC is subject to Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) requests. In processing a request under the OIA, the NZFC will consult with the relevant applicant prior to making a decision to release or withhold the information.



## Next steps

Applicants will be contacted as soon as possible after a decision is made and you will receive an email notification with the decision.

If your application is unsuccessful, the email will have your script assessments from the Black List attached.

If your application is successful, you will receive a decision letter confirming that you are one of the six selected projects along with your script assessments from the Black List.

The successful projects will be required to sign an agreement relating to participating in the virtual workshop and mentorship series, and a Development Financing agreement.

Both agreements will outline your obligations, and the Development Financing Agreement will cover the conditions of the grant, including regular reporting deadlines and deliverables. Although optional as application materials, successful applicants will be required to provide a Development Budget and Development Timeline. NZFC staff will be able to guide you in creating these if required.

A final reminder that if you have any questions please contact us by email  
[blnzp@nzfilm.co.nz](mailto:blnzp@nzfilm.co.nz) or phone 0800 659 75