

# The Canadian Comedy Film Igniter FAQ Page

## EVENT INFORMATION, IMPORTANT DATES, AND REGULATIONS HERE:

<https://www.canfilmfest.ca/comedy-igniter>

<https://www.firecrackerdepartment.com/cfffirecracker-film-igniter>

Sign up HERE: <https://filmfreeway.com/CanadianFilmFestIndustry>

## IMPORTANT DATES

- Thu Dec 11 - Submissions open via FilmFreeway signup
- Thu Jan 15 - Community Networking Event
- Thu Jan 29 - Submissions close
- Sun Feb 01 - Prompt announced
- Mon Feb 02 - Igniter Industry Day - Panels
- Thu Feb 12 - Mid-challenge Virtual Gathering
- Sun Mar 01 - Films Due
- Mon Mar 02 to Thu Mar 11 - Jury Adjudication
- Wed Mar 18 - Selections notification
- Thu Mar 25 - Selected Films Screened at CFF

## ELIGIBILITY & REGULATIONS:

1. Key applicants must self-identify as female or gender diverse and be 18+.
2. Key applicants must be the writer, director, and/or producer of the project. We don't care who comes on to support you, but we want to see female/non-binary names taking up those key credits and starring roles.
3. Key applicants must be Canadian citizens or have permanent resident status.
4. The final film must be a maximum of 6 minutes in length, including end credits.
5. All films must include the specific prompts or risk ineligibility. Prompts will be presented to applicants on February 1, 2026.
6. All creativity and principal photography (writing/shot-listing/designing/shooting/editing/post-production/delivery) must occur during the official filming period, February 1 - February 28, 2026. The majority of each film must contain footage shot or created within these dates.
7. The project must fit the comedy genre, but is not limited to a genre hybrid, so long as the work is intended to be humorous by eliciting laughter from the audience.
8. The jury's focus on the films will be on story, comedy and execution of vision. We recognize that all teams have various access to resources, so production quality will not be the priority for assessment and consideration. Teams are encouraged

to be creative with the resources available to them. Any type of video or film camera may be used.

9. The project can be in any language; however, English subtitles must be provided for dialogue other than English.
10. Applicants must have the rights to any music and clearance for the art used in the film.
11. Final films must be uploaded to FilmFreeway in its media format requirements.
12. Canadian Film Fest/Firecracker Dept reserves the right to disqualify entries deemed to be inappropriate or otherwise non-compliant. Content involving nudity, minors, guns, sexual violence, or other offensive material will not be accepted.
13. Top films selected for screening will be determined at the jury's discretion based on the number of submissions.
14. The Canadian Film Fest and Firecracker Department require that you acknowledge Comedy Igniter's support by including our company logos in the end credits of the project. Logos and specifications will be provided to you.
15. The protagonist must be female or non-binary (we want to see stories from these perspectives).

#### **SIGN UP INFO:**

1. Select a lead point-person who will be designated the key responsibilities of receiving information, signing up and uploading project information on FilmFreeway, and distributing materials and communication to the rest of the team.
2. Sign up/login to FilmFreeway and create a new film project - ensure that your lead point-person email and contact info are correctly labelled.
3. Label the project title COMEDY IGNITER for now (applicants are encouraged to change the title and update synopsis/film info upon delivery).
4. Enter the main point of contact under "Submitter Information".
5. Tell us who your key applicants are under "credits" (writer/director/producer/main cast). This can be updated/changed later. Key applicants must identify as female or gender diverse.
6. No specifications or screenings/distribution needed at this time.
7. Save project.
8. Go to [\[FILMFREEWAY LINK\]](#), and hit the green "submit now" button with your selected "Comedy Igniter" project. Add to cart and checkout. The \$150 payment covers all your program fees; you're officially an Igniter!
9. Please note that your judging status will remain "undecided" until after the final films have been submitted and juried in early March.
10. A CFF representative will be in contact with your lead point-person via the email listed in your profile regarding next steps and workshop details.

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## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Do I have to use the dialogue prompts word for word? Can I change pronouns?**

We suggest that you stick with the exact words that the Guest Prompt Provider gave. Making it work creatively is the main point of this challenge.

### **Is it okay to have a song with other lyrics playing after the last line delivery?**

Yes. We will not count songs - with lyrics or without - as a line of dialogue.

### **How do I find the crew roles I need to fill?**

Social media can go a long way in connecting you to other film people. Look for film communities on Facebook. Put out postings for the roles you are seeking, be transparent and upfront that it is for low/no money, you're pursuing a fun comedy film challenge. Reach out to local colleges and film production schools, students are often looking for experience opportunities and will respond if they are interested.

### **Can we tweak our film with sound and colour AFTER that deadline?**

No, submission cannot be updated after the deadline. However, if your film is selected for the showcase, we will allow for some additional sound and colour tweaks but nothing that changes the story or edit.

### **Can there be nudity?**

No nudity or graphic content please. This will result in automatic disqualification without a refund. Filmmakers are urged to keep their film equivalent to a PG-13 film rating.

### **Does my Protagonist have to be female/non-binary?**

Yes. We want to see stories from the female/non-binary gaze. Break free from traditional gender roles!

### **Can I have a Male Character?**

We have no limits or expectations for the number of characters you feature on screen. But if there's a hero - we want them to be female/non-binary.

**Can my writer be male?** No. Your core team (writer, director, lead producer) must be female or non-binary artists. Collaboration is encouraged and supporting roles can be anyone (like cinematographer, editor, actors, associate producer, mentor, etc - credit them accurately, but don't give them credit as a writer, director, or producer!) We created this challenge to encourage more female/n-b people to take on these key above the line roles and build their careers on these credits and experiences, so that's what we want to see.

### **Can I write or film my Igniter film before the prompt is provided?**

No. The purpose of the Comedy Igniter is for you to challenge yourself to create, shoot, and deliver a finished film on a four-week timeline. The prompts are to ensure that this is a new project made in this timeline. We're not policing your process, but if you wedge the prompts into something that's already been written or shot, more often than not, it will be very apparent to the jury.

### **Am I allowed to be on more than one team?**

If your schedule allows - go for it! Try your hat at different roles. Make sure you credit everyone accordingly and update any key roles in your FilmFreeway Project before the deadline above.

### **I'm an ACTRA member - am I able to act in a film or write/direct only?**

Yes! Thank you ACTRA for your support for the Comedy Igniter. Registering ACTRA talent is now published on our shared Igniter drive, available to all key participants.

### **Can we do stunts or use guns/weapons?**

Hard no. Keep it clean, uncomplicated and safe. Safety is the #1 priority. If you're not sure if something is a stunt or not, don't do it. We encourage creativity in making it look like you're doing something special on camera over an actual special skill where you are doing it but putting yourself or others at risk. *\*\*Films that violate this clause will automatically be disqualified from the challenge and future editions of the program and CFF.*

### **Can we use licensed music in our short?**

Unless you obtain permission from the artist, no. As with all films, you must have the rights to any music and clearance to any art or logos shown on screen. There are great resources for royalty free music out there, give it a search.

### **Experience eligibility.**

While we encourage emerging creatives to use this program as their push to pursue above-the-line credits (writer, director, producer), there is no experience eligibility required. Whoever wants to make a funny film is welcome to participate, so long as you identify as a female or non-binary creative.

### **Does anything have to be submitted other than Writer/Director/Producer?**

Nothing else needs to be submitted to sign up for the challenge. Just submit your key creatives (writer, director, producer) in FilmFreeway under "credits" for now. You will fill out the other categories and upload the project file once you've completed your film.

### **Can I register on my own or do I need a full team?**

Yes, you can register on your own if you plan on taking on the key writer, director, and lead producer roles. Please update your project on FilmFreeway if you meet others who join your team in these roles.

### **What kind of funding is available?**

Participants are responsible for their own budget requirements.

### **Where do I get equipment?**

Igniter is not responsible for providing equipment. We encourage you to use the resources available to you.

### **Where do I find crew?**

Igniter is not responsible for your crew, but please join our Igniter Meet & Greet event, see schedule above. Meet others who are considering joining the Igniter challenge too. We'll be there to answer your questions and discuss the process. Also feel free to reach out to potential collaborators through the Firecracker Dept Community Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/206571203429663>

### **I'm an editor, can I get involved?**

Join the Firecracker Dept Facebook group and state your offerings: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/206571203429663>

### **Do I need to submit a synopsis when I sign up?**

No! All you need to submit is the names of your key crew (writer, director, lead producer). Teams are encouraged to start coming up with your concept after the creative prompt is announced.

### **Can I do this if I'm not Canadian?**

As per CFF guidelines, your core team (writer, director, lead producer) must be a Canadian Citizen or a Permanent Resident.

### **Can I do all key roles of writer, director and producer or do I need someone individually for each role?**

You can do them all if you wish! Or split them up. Core teams can consist of 1, 2, or 3 female or non-binary filmmakers who are taking on the key above-the-line positions of writer, director and producer.

### **Can the writer's role be shared between two people? Or even more in the case of an improv collective?**

You can split roles, as long as there are no more than 3 names listed in your core team (so in this case with a big collective, you can't credit more than 3 key writers, but you could give contributing writers a special thanks). FYI - There is no limit on cast.

**Can you participate if you live in Vancouver?**

100%! Should your film be selected to be part of the Igniter Showcase at the Canadian Film Fest in Toronto in March, CFF and Firecracker Dept cannot cover costs, so filmmakers are responsible for their own travel fees.

**Will the workshops be recorded if I can't make the time and date?**

Yes, we will be recording and sharing the videos for a limited time throughout the event.

**Is the \$150 fee per participant or per team?**

The \$150 submission fee is per project, per team.

**How do I get links to the virtual workshops?**

Links will be sent out to the emails provided to your team leader in advance. Make sure that email address is correct on FilmFreeway.

**How many projects make the shortlist?**

This is subject to change, but we'll be aiming to showcase the top 6 films at the festival, just as we do for our festival shorts programs.

**Is it 1 pass, or 1 pass per Key role (writer, director, producer) Total of 3 passes?**

It's two passes per team and they can go to any female/non-binary person in your key crew or main cast.

**I volunteer for Firecracker events, can I submit?**

Yes.

**Is there a specific file format for submission?**

We'll provide you with all the technical specs and requirements. Refer to the requirements listed on FilmFreeway. Should your film be chosen for the CFF Showcase, the festival will take care of creating a DCP for you.

**Can you please clarify when the Igniter films will be screened?**

See schedule above.

**Whether I get into the showcase or not, what should I do with my film after the competition?**

Get it out there! You're now all set up on FilmFreeway. Enter it into festivals, play it in public screenings, upload it to websites or your social media, show it to anyone you can!

Should you have further questions, please contact -

**Director of Industry, Jen Pogue, [jen@canfilmfest.ca](mailto:jen@canfilmfest.ca)**

**And/Or**

**Firecracker Department, Liesl Lafferty,  
[firecrackerwritingdepartment@gmail.com](mailto:firecrackerwritingdepartment@gmail.com)**