AXS FILM FUND

2026 AXS FILM FUND APPLICATION PROPOSAL QUESTIONS

Notes to Applicants: If you need assistance or an alternative method of submitting your application, please contact filmfund@axslab.org

We ask that all requests for assistance are submitted no later than July 24th, 2026 to allow our team time to assist.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

PROPOSAL INFORMATION

***Project Logline**
Please provide a 2-3 sentence summary of the project that captures the most important elements — setting, participants*, key issues, and form.

***Topic Summary (250 to 750 words)**
Explain the topic, theme, context, stakes, relevance, or questions that you're exploring in your project.

***Story or Concept Summary (250 to 750 words)**
Give an overview introducing the main participants and plot points in the film. If your project is non-narrative or not character-driven, what is your concept, and how is it constructed? Please be clear about the elements of your story that remain unknown or unclear and highlight the questions that may steer its direction.

***Artistic Approach (250 to 750 words)**
Describe your artistic vision for your project. What are the formal elements of the project, including any artistic devices, visual and audio elements? Does this project fit within or reference any specific filmmaking or narrative traditions?

***Creative Control**
In one or two sentences please describe who has creative control and legal ownership of the project.

***Project Stage and Timeline (50 to 100 words)**
In list form, outline the projected production timeline from the development of the project to the anticipated completion date. Please include major project activities, production schedules, and anticipated post-production and release dates.

CONNECTION, ACCOUNTABILITY, & COMMUNITY CARE

***Connection and Point of View (125 to 250 words)**
What is your connection to the story (i.e., to the participants, themes, community, location, archives, etc.)? How do your interests, motivations, and/or worldview shape your approach to this story? What lens, perspective, insights, or bias do you bring to the story?

***Accountability and Community Care (125 to 250 words)**
Describe your ethical considerations and practices of accountability in your filmmaking process. This can include a description of your guiding values, processes of establishing and maintaining ongoing consent, providing transparency about your filmmaking processes, collecting feedback etc. For example: How do you reflect on and address the potential consequences of your storytelling choices on participants, audiences, your crew, and/or other stakeholders? What activities or strategies do you use to implement your values as they relate to care for yourself and others? For further guidance, reference DAWG's Framework for Values Ethics and Accountability in Nonfiction Filmmaking

***Safety and Security (50 to 100 words)**
If relevant, please reflect on any known safety and security concerns throughout the lifecycle of your project — from development through distribution. How will you mitigate risks (digital, physical, legal, etc.) to your participants and crew? For further guidance, reference the Safe and Secure Handbook.

***Accessibility (50 -100 words)**
If applicable, how do you intend to make your film and/or production accessible to D/deaf, blind/low vision, disabled, and neurodiverse crew, participants, and audiences? Please ensure that these accessibility costs (captions, audio descriptions, transcripts) are reflected in the submitted budget. For further guidance, reference the FWD-Doc Toolkit and the FWD-Doc Engagement Pack.

***Audience Consideration (50 - 100 words)**
Describe the audiences you would like your film to reach and why. How do you plan to reach and engage them?

***Intended Impact (50 - 100 words)**
Describe your vision for the influence the film will have. If relevant, what are the impact goals and strategies for your project? For further guidance, reference The Impact Field Guide.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

***How does disability inform your artistic practice? (up to 200 words)**
This question is open to interpretation. This can be about how your disability informs your own artistic practice, how you think about ensuring your art is accessible to audiences, etc...

***With the rise of generative AI, we believe transparency about its usage is vital to holding ourselves accountable.**

Did you use generative AI to complete this application? (select one)
Yes
No

If Yes:

***Please explain how you utilized generative AI to complete this application (up to 150 words)**

***Do you plan to use generative AI at any point in your creative process for your project?**
Yes
No

If Yes:
***Please explain why and how it will be used. Please include how you plan to hold yourself responsible and accountable with its use (up to 250 words)**

***For Marketing and Distribution Applicants ONLY**
Marketing and Distribution (up to 250 words)
Describe the intended distribution of your project. Specify any plans for festival, theatrical, and/or community screenings, as well as any plans for securing broadcast and/or distribution.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION
*Fundraising Strategy (50 to 100 words)
Describe the overall fundraising strategy and who from the team will lead these efforts for the film.

***Grant Impact (50 to 100 words)**

Should you receive a grant, describe how any granted funds would be spent and how the funds would help you move forward with your project.

***Funding Detail**
List all sources of funding and amounts. Include types of funding (i.e. government, foundations, pre-sales, private sources, other) and status (to apply, applied, and confirmed).

Example:

Funding Source	Amount	Status
Lovely Film Club Foundation	$20,000	to apply

***Comprehensive Line-Item Expense Budget - ATTACHMENT REQUIRED**
Please provide a budget, from development through release, in U.S. dollars, including a budget total. Please ensure that any accessibility, safety, and duty of care costs mentioned in your above responses are reflected in the submitted budget. For further guidance, reference A (Revised!) Introduction to Documentary Budgeting.

VISUAL SAMPLES
Please provide links and passwords for both samples. Links and passwords should be valid for at least eight months from the date of your submission.

AXS Film Fund is not responsible for any broken links, missing passwords, or inaccessible submissions.

Captions or English Subtitles are required for the Current Work Sample and highly recommended for the Director's Prior Work sample. For further guidance on creating captions, reference FWD-Doc Practices & Resources We Recommend as well as the NAI Captioning and Audio Description Resources.

FOR DOCUMENTARY FILM APPLICANTS

***Description of Director's Prior work (50 to 100 words)**
We encourage applicants to include a link to a previous work (any length or genre) by the director. Emerging filmmakers with no previous directing experience may also apply without a previous directing sample or may provide a past work sample from another creative team member if attached (producer, cinematographer, editor, etc).

Discuss the relevance of the work to the current project. If the current project is a departure from the previous work, how will this film differ?

***Link to Current Project Sample**

***Current Sample/Rough Cut (50 to 100 words)**
What should reviewers be looking for in your sample? Explain what is present and absent in the sample, and how it will differ as a finished film. Describe how it is representative of the intended story, style, subject, or other aspect of the project. We encourage applicants not to spend extra resources creating a sample for each individual fund. If your current sample is outside of the suggested length requirements, please provide reviewers with the time codes of the portion of the sample that best reflects your intended style and approach (e.g., 3:15-12:15).

- **Development applicants** are encouraged (but not required) to include visual material such as scene selects, teasers, pitch decks, or other edited footage (up to 15 minutes);
- **Production applicants** are encouraged to submit a sample between 10 to 20 minutes. The sample should demonstrate your access to characters, visual treatment, and the developing tone and style. We encourage applicants to submit a complete scene that provides the viewer insight into the team's ability to communicate their intention.
- **Post-production applicants** require a sample of between 10-20 minutes that demonstrates access to characters, story arc or concept, and visual treatment. If available, a rough cut may be submitted. However, please refer to each organization's maximum length requirements.
- **Marketing/Distribution applicants** should submit a full cut, and identify which 15 minute section they'd like reviews to review.

Pitch Deck Upload (optional, limit 1 file)

FOR NONFICTION NEW MEDIA APPLICANTS

Captions or English Subtitles are required for the Current Work Sample and highly recommended for the Director's Prior Work sample. For further guidance on creating captions, reference FWD-Doc Practices & Resources We Recommend as well as the NAI Captioning and Audio Description Resources. Audio samples that can't be captioned, should be submitted with transcripts.

***Description of Director's Prior work sample (50 to 100 words)**
We encourage applicants to include a link to a previous work (any length or genre) by the director. Emerging filmmakers with no previous directing experience may also apply without a previous directing sample or may provide a past work sample from another creative team member if attached (producer, cinematographer, editor, etc).

Discuss the relevance of the work to the current project. If the current project is a departure from the previous work, how will this film differ?

***Current Sample Upload (Limit 2 files or a link)**

***Description of Current Sample (50 to 100 words)**
What should reviewers be looking for in your sample? Explain what is present and absent in the sample, and how it will differ as a finished project. Describe how it is representative of the intended story, style, subject, or other aspect of the project. We encourage applicants not to spend extra resources creating a sample for each individual fund. If your current sample is audio/video and is outside of 15 minutes, please provide reviewers with the time codes of the portion of the sample that best reflects your intended style and approach (e.g., 3:15-12:15).

- **Development applicants** are encouraged (but not required) to include visual material such as pitch decks, vision boards, written materials, or other visual materials that will help the viewer understand the vision of the project.
- **Production applicants** are encouraged to submit visual, audio and/or video material that demonstrates your access to characters, visual treatment, the developing tone and style, and provides the viewer insight into the team's ability to communicate their intention. If it's available online, please share an in progress link.
- **Post-production applicants** should submit a sample that demonstrates access to characters, story arc or concept, and visual treatment. A draft of your new media project should be submitted. If that is not possible due to its format, visual, audio and/or video material that shows your project will be accepted.
- **Marketing/Distribution** applicants should submit their completed new media project. If that's not possible due to its format, visual, audio and/or video material that showcases your completed project will be accepted.

*Participants is used throughout this document, but depending on the specifics of your project you may want to refer to your participants as characters/contributors/subjects/protagonists etc.