

SUNDANCE DOCUMENTARY FILM PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

NB: Development proposals MUST be far enough along in their research to include ALL of the criteria listed below. If even one element is missing, your project is too early for consideration.

BRIEF LOGLINE

In a concise 2-3 sentences provide a description of your film that cites location, characters or subjects, mission and stakes as applicable.

SUMMARY OF TOPIC (1-2 PAGES)

Briefly provide contextual information to acquaint the reader to the subject, advising why the topic is critical and why such a film is needed now. Explain any global relevance for the contemporary social issues addressed. Describe why you are the best person to tell this story. Please be concise.

NARRATIVE SYNOPSIS (1-2 PAGES)

Clearly communicate the story your film will tell. Who are the characters and what is their journey? What might be different for them from the beginning to the end? What is the central question your film will answer? Consider narrative arc, point-of-view, and use of artistic elements.

Both Development and Production/Post-production proposals MUST convey some vision for a finished film. Development proposals that have not yet identified possible characters or subjects, locations or are unable to articulate the narrative framework or the story's central question will not be considered.

STATUS OF FILM (1 PARAGRAPH)

Provide a snapshot of the current creative and financial status of the project. Describe creative avenues you will pursue to further develop your story. Describe access to your research as well as to artistic elements. Guestimate your completion timeline for the film.

TOTAL BUDGET IN US DOLLARS

If you are applying for Development funding you must include the best guestimate for all stages of production and post-production. This *must* be a figure in US dollars.

LINE ITEM BUDGET (1-2 PAGE BUDGET FOR ALL STAGES OF PRODUCTION)

Please provide a comprehensive line item budget including all expenses from pre- to post-production. Sample budgets provided on the websites below.

TOTAL AMOUNT OF FUNDING SECURED TO DATE (IF APPLICABLE)

Total all funds that have been disbursed and/or committed. Do not include sources that are pending. Prior commitments are *not* required. This *must* be *converted* into US dollars.

LIST OF FUNDING SOURCES WITH AMOUNTS (IF APPLICABLE)

List the amount committed to date from each source (grants, pre-sales, license agreements, donations, fundraisers, producer investment, in-kind donations, etc.) List only funds that have been disbursed and/or committed. Do not include sources that are pending.

FUNDRAISING STRATEGY (1-2 PARAGRAPHS)

Indicate relevant sources you will pursue to meet unmet budget requirements.

DISTRIBUTION AND MARKETING STRATEGY (1-2 PARAGRAPHS)

Characterize the intended distribution life for your film, including relevant broadcast, festival, theatrical, education or home video distribution secured or intended.

ABOUT THE SAMPLE WORK

Current Rough Cut (1 PARAGRAPH)

Production and Post-production proposals must provide a rough cut of 20-75 minutes. The rough cut should convey the characters, their mission or journey, the intended story, style, etc. Explain concisely what is present or absent on the sample, and how it will differ as a finished film. *Production proposals without at least 20 minutes of continuously edited footage will not be considered. Please do not send unedited rushes, extended trailers, Youtube clips, or raw footage.*

Development proposals are strongly encouraged to include trailers, teasers, clips, research footage or short scenes. Please note we do NOT fund films in the general research stage. All proposals must convey some vision for a finished film.

Director's Prior Work (1 PARAGRAPH)

For all proposals, describe the prior work and its intentions. Articulate the relevance to current proposal, if any. If the current project is a departure, how will the treatment differ. *Even if there is more than one director, please only send one most relevant prior work.*

KEY CREATIVE PERSONNEL (1 PARAGRAPH EACH)

Provide brief biographies (50-150 words each) for the key creative team if attached (director, producer, cinematographer, editor). Do NOT send resumes, CVs or extensive filmographies. List other advisors or consultants, if applicable.

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT (*IF APPLICABLE*)

If audience engagement with the issues is intended, explain how you would motivate viewers to get more deeply involved. How might viewers make a difference? Characterize any outreach partners intended or secured.

INTERACTIVE ELEMENTS (*IF APPLICABLE*)

If applicable, explain how you would enhance your project through multi-platform and ancillary elements. How might these elements generate social engagement? Feel free to list technological innovations you might creatively harness.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Sample Proposal from Austin Film Society

<http://www.austinfilm.org/files/Sample%20Proposal%20-%20Documentary.pdf>

Sample Budget from Austin Film Society

http://www.austinfilm.org/files/Sample%20Budget%20-%20Documentary_0.pdf

Sample Proposal from Latino Public Broadcasting

<http://www.lpbp.org/postproduction.pdf>

Sample Review Checklist from Council on Foundations

http://www.fundfilm.org/for_grant/for_grant_checklist.htm

Tips on Treatments from ITVS

<http://www.itvs.org/producers/treatment.html>

Proposal Writing Guidelines from PBS

<http://www.pbs.org/producers/proposal.html>

The Mechanics of Documentary Storytelling by Andy Carvin

<http://www.slideshare.net/acarvin/the-mechanics-of-documentary-storytelling/>

Michael Rabiger DOCUMENTARY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

http://72.14.253.104/search?q=cache:GwCKkj1qjeYJ:www.chicagomediaworks.com/2instructworks/3editing_doc/doc_docdevelopmentprocess.doc+Michael+Rabiger+DOCUMENTARY+DEVELOPMENT+PROCESS&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=us