Funding application checklist

For a short film or early development application. Futures in Film CIC · v1 · reviewed 13 November 2026.

Tick each box as you go. Every fund is different: where this list and the fund's guidelines disagree, the guidelines win.

Before you start

- ☐ Read the fund's guidelines in full, twice. Highlight every 'must'.
- ☐ Check you are eligible: where you live, your experience, the length and type of film, who must be the lead applicant.
- ☐ Check the deadline and time of day, and how long the funder takes to decide. Will that fit your shoot dates?
- ☐ Talk to the fund's team or your BFI NETWORK talent executive if they offer advice sessions or a pre-application chat.
- ☐ Look at films the fund has backed before. Does your film sit comfortably with them?

The project

- ☐ A one-line logline that says who, wants what, and what stands in the way.
- ☐ A short synopsis, inside the form's word limit.
- ☐ The script, treatment or (for animation) storyboard, in the format asked, with page numbers and your contact details where allowed.
- ☐ Why this film, why you, why now: a short, specific statement in your own words.
- ☐ Who the audience is and how they will see it (festivals, online, community screenings).

The team

- ☐ Producer, writer and director named, with short bios and links to past work.
- ☐ A director's sample: a previous short, a scene or a mood film. Check the link works and any password is included.
- ☐ Key crew and cast attached, if any, with written confirmation they are interested.
- ☐ How you will include early-career and under-represented crew, if the fund asks.

Budget and finance plan

- ☐ A line-by-line budget on the funder's template if they have one. Every line filled in, 0 where it does not apply.
- ☐ Crew and cast paid at least the legal minimum, with rates based on the current Bectu and Equity agreements.
- ☐ Access costs, insurance, music licences, captions and deliverables included. These are the lines people forget.
- ☐ In-kind support valued fairly and shown separately.
- ☐ A finance plan whose total equals the budget, showing what is confirmed and what is pending.
- ☐ Letters or emails confirming other money or in-kind support.

Rights and practicalities

- ☐ You own or have an option on the story. If it is based on someone else's work, you have that in writing.
- ☐ Music, archive and artwork you plan to use are either cleared or budgeted to clear.
- ☐ A realistic schedule: prep, shoot days, post, delivery.
- ☐ Safeguarding and safety thought through if you work with young people, stunts, water, vehicles or heights.

Before you press submit

- ☐ Answer the question asked, in the order asked. Use the funder's own words for their criteria.
- ☐ Cut jargon. A tired assessor at 11pm should understand it first time.
- ☐ Ask someone outside the project to read it and tell you what the film is in one sentence.
- ☐ Check every link, attachment and file name. Export documents as PDF unless told otherwise.
- ☐ Submit a day early. Portals slow down near deadlines.

After

- ☐ Note the decision date and do not chase before it.
- ☐ If it is a no, ask whether feedback is offered. Many funds cannot give it; some can.
- ☐ Keep every draft. Most funded films were turned down somewhere first.