



Filmmaker FAQ

THE FESTIVAL

When does the Washington DC Independent Film Festival (DCIFF) take place?

The 20th annual DCIFF will take place March 1st-10th, 2019.

Where does the Washington DC Independent Film Festival (DCIFF) take place?

The festival will take place at various venues in downtown Washington, DC including the On The Hill Summit in Congress.

SUBMISSION

How do I submit my film to DCIFF?

You can submit your film using **one** of the three methods below: Please note that submission categories are not always the same as screening/Award categories: student films is a submission category only. All student submissions must have ID proof to be considered.

1. **Mail** a completed submission form with 2 copies of your screener* and payment to:

DC Independent Film Festival
1435 Holly Street NW
Washington DC 20012
USA

* **Screener formats:** We accept DVDs (Region 0,1 or PAL if needed), BluRays and Digital screeners (e.g. .mov/.mpeg) on USB drives. We also accept Vimeo links but we do not download screeners.

Please note: We do not return submission materials. Please check all screeners before sending. Sending your film on 2 formats sometimes avoids screening problems during the review process.

1. **FilmFreeway**

Upload your film to [FilmFreeway](#) or include a link to a password protected screener on Vimeo or YouTube. You will be asked to pay online if a submission fee is required.

1. **Withoutabox**

Submit your film via [Withoutabox](#). You will be asked to pay online if a submission fee is required.

How do I send you my press kit?

You can upload your press kit and other files supporting your submission to FilmFreeway or Withoutabox. You can also email files as attachments to dciffsubmissions@gmail.com. When emailing please include your film title and FilmFreeway/Withoutabox Tracking ID (if applicable) in the email subject line. Include your film title at the start of the filename for each attachment. A press kit is NOT required for submission but it does help reviewers.

What premiere status do you require?

Your film should be less than one year old and should not have already been screened in the Metro DC area (private screenings excepted). It should not be publicly available online. East Coast & U.S. Premieres are preferred.

Please keep the festival informed of any changes in the status of your film: for example if you have had a world premiere or have been offered a chance to screen in Washington DC.

Can I submit a film that is a work-in-progress?

Yes. If you send a work-in-progress film you may only send in one replacement version of your film no later than the late deadline. All submissions are reviewed by our programming team, but we cannot guarantee that the replacement copy will be viewed. We recommend submitting the most finished version of your film. If your film is selected you must send us a complete exhibition copy before the festival.

Can I submit a trailer instead of a work-in-progress or a completed film?

No. We will not be able to accept trailers as submissions.

What happens if I send you a link to review a film before I officially submit my work to DCIFF?

We will not review your film or screener until we have received a complete submission from you. We do this both for legal reasons and to be fair to others. We realize that this requires you to pay a submission fee, but it takes a lot of time and energy to have your work reviewed and this covers our costs. All submission fees go to supporting filmmakers to attend the festival.

Are you looking for anything in particular?

We are keen to have submissions that take risks, that are interactive, and that are artistic and experimental as well as narrative. We welcome submissions of a strong and controversial nature, encourage animation and support feature-length directors.

How firm are your submission rules and criteria?

We aim to be flexible and are open to new ideas and cutting-edge submissions so we will certainly consider submissions that bend the genres and the mind. We are strict on DC premiere status. If you are not entirely within the existing rules, please email us at dciffsubmissions@gmail.com and discuss this with us.

What if I have a distributor?

If you have distribution, please make sure that you have permission to send your work to a film festival. DCIFF never pays screening fees to distributors for films that are in competition.

Can I send you my film to screen out of competition?

Yes, DCIFF has small non-competitive sections in the area of political and experimental films. We still require a small submission fee and a filled out submission form. In this case your film does not have to be completed in 2017/18. We will be looking for topics that are politically volatile, artistically cutting edge, technologically innovative and/or quite unexpected. We advise you to send us a note explaining why we should include your film.

Do I have to obtain rights and clearances for the music or other copyrighted material included in my film?

At the time of submission, you are not yet required to obtain all rights and clearances. If your film is selected you must sign a release certifying that you have obtained all rights and clearances prior to screening your film at the festival.

Will you acknowledge receipt of my submission?

The person designated as "submitter" will receive an email confirmation once his or her submission has been accepted for consideration.

DEADLINES and FEES**What are the submission deadlines and fees?**

Deadlines are postmark dates or upload dates.

Do you consider waivers?

We rarely consider waivers, not because we don't empathize with independent filmmakers, but because we are an entirely volunteer-run festival, we coordinate over 30 reviewers and we wish to be fair. DCIFF alumni and students with ID do have free earlybird submissions. However, if you feel you have a strong case email us at dciffsubmissions@gmail.com

What are the submission fees?

Submission Fees are the same across all platforms and can be found in the submission form at the DCIFF website and at Filmfreeway. They range from from \$15 to \$65.

How do I pay submission fees?

1. Pay by mail

Send check, money order or international money order payable to DC Independent Film Festival with your complete application package to:

DC Independent Film Festival
1435 Holly Street NW
Washington DC 20012
USA

2. Pay with PayPal

Request an invoice from dciffsubmissions@gmail.com and we will invoice you directly through the PayPal system.

3. Pay online with your Withoutabox or FilmFreeway submission.

How do we define the High School Student, Student and DCIFF Alumni categories?

***High School Students** must be aged 19 years or younger and must have completed the project while in High School. Applications should include the email address of a teacher who can confirm High School student status. High School films should be less than 30 minutes in length.

****Current students** receive discounted submission rates. Attach a valid copy of your student ID to get preferential student rates. If you do not have a current student ID, applications should include the email address of an academic advisor who can confirm student status. "Student films" is NOT an award category for the festival, they are judged against all other films of the same type and length.

*****DCIFF Alumni** are filmmakers who have had a film screened at a previous DC Independent Film Festival. You should include your previous film title and year screened on your submission form.

FILM CATEGORIES

What are the submission categories?

Submission categories are based on the length of the film and status of the filmmaker (DCIFF alumni, student, regular) and are: animation, short (including experimental), narrative feature, short documentary, feature documentary and out-of-competition films. VR, TV pilots and web series should be submitted in the shorts category.

SELECTION

Who reviews the submissions?

It is our intention to give all submissions equal opportunity. All submissions are screened by at least one reviewer and all recommended films are screened by the programming director. Animation submissions are screened by a dedicated team of experts. All feature films are reviewed by the programming director.

When and how do I know if my film has been selected?

We aim to finish reviewing by the end of December 2018. We often send out announcements section by section. We will get in touch with the person designated as “submitter” directly before we make an official announcement to get updates on the screening status of your film. If we find that you have already screened your film in Washington DC during this process, we reserve the right to remove your film from selection even after the public announcement.

If my film is not selected for the festival will you let me know why?

Unfortunately, due to the large volume of submissions our programmers cannot offer individual critiques. We select each film individually and we program after we have selected. The final selection is based on: quality of filmmaking, originality, depth of content and our sense that the film will find an audience in the DC community.

How many films do you accept?

We do not expect to screen more than 100 films. We have averaged about 72 films every year for the past four years. We keep our numbers low so that we can really support the filmmakers who get accepted and give them and their films the attention they need.

Can I withdraw my film from competition?

By submitting to the festival, the filmmaker(s) acknowledges that once a film is accepted and programmed for screening in competition at DCIFF, the film may not be withdrawn without the express written permission of DCIFF given in DCIFF's sole discretion. There are no exceptions to this rule even in the case of technical issues. In the event a screening print is not delivered, DCIFF reserves the right to screen publicly the DVD or digital submission.

How do I contact you with questions?

Email us at dciffsubmissions@gmail.com