

## Iowa Certified Film Festival Program Certification Guidelines

Produce Iowa, which exists within the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA), administers the Iowa Certified Film Festival Program (Program). The purpose of the Program is to encourage the growth of Iowa's film tourism and film industry through identifying and supporting quality homegrown film festivals. A film festival registered and headquartered in Iowa may apply for certification by the IEDA as a Certified Film Festival (CFF) through the Program. Certification remains in effect for three years following the date of certification, provided the CFF remains in compliance with these published Guidelines, including timely submission of the required Annual Reports.

The goals of the Program are to distinguish those Iowa film festivals which have created unique and professional film events in their communities and prioritized filmmaker and film enthusiast experiences; promote the CFFs and their supported activities; and provide assistance and encourage collaboration between CFFs.

### Contact

Potential applicants, especially first-time applicants, are encouraged to review all published material, including the administrative rules and these Guidelines, and contact Produce Iowa Program Manager EJ Philby Burton at [ej.philbyburton@iowaeda.com](mailto:ej.philbyburton@iowaeda.com) well in advance of application deadlines if they have any questions regarding the Program.

### Accessibility

The IEDA is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to eligible applicants. For application support, please contact the Accessibility Coordinator Elizabeth Ferreira at [elizabeth.ferreira@iowaeda.com](mailto:elizabeth.ferreira@iowaeda.com).

### Timeline

#### Application Deadline

Applications for certification will be accepted on a rolling basis. Typically, applicants are notified of certification decisions within eight weeks after submission. Applicants will need to submit an application for certification by September to be included in the upcoming year's Certified Film Festival Road Map.

## Program Benefits

Once certified, the IEDA shall endeavor to promote projects and initiatives implemented by CFFs through established networks.

- The IEDA will provide:
  - IEDA logo
  - Certification image and letter of certification
  - Road Map
- Eligibility for Certified Film Festival Sponsorship funding
- CFFs will be included in the Iowa Certified Film Festivals Network, which provides opportunities for connection through networking and marketing opportunities with CFFs across Iowa.
- Additionally, IEDA staff will provide other assistance as available, including certain technical assistance to CFFs and communication on relevant opportunities such as grants or workshops.

## Certification

### Iowa Certified Film Festivals

Certification by the IEDA is an achievement, intended to formally recognize that a particular Iowa film festival is acknowledged to have reached a certain level of significance and professionalism in their community.

Certification is organized into different tiers to recognize the different types and sizes of film festivals in the state, which will also benefit filmmakers and film audiences when deciding which CFFs to attend.

To be certified, a CFF should exemplify the following traits:

- An existing and recurring film festival in the state of Iowa that is run with professionalism and integrity, including the film selection process.
- An established film festival that knows its own identity and can be set apart from other film festivals.
- An anticipated event year-after-year that benefits the community of film enthusiasts who come to participate in the screenings, workshops, and panels.
- A hub for filmmakers who want to further their careers by distributing their films, meeting other film crew, and networking with industry professionals.

We highly encourage CFFs to participate in the network of other CFFs and make use of the available benefits that come with the certification. We also encourage CFFs to work with their local tourism office or convention and visitor's bureau (CVB) for mutual benefit.

### Annual Report

Beginning one year after certification, CFFs are required to submit to the IEDA an annual report due November 15 each year to remain certified during the three-year certification period. The report will document the status of the CFF, including an opportunity to update any information that has changed, and may require information on activities within the past year and plans for future year(s). Information provided in the annual reports may lead to a change in a CFF's tier.

## Re-Certification

After three years, a CFF may apply for re-certification. The re-certification process will be similar to the initial application process and will include updating information on the festival identity, operations and programming information, the CFF's assets, goals for the next three years, accomplishments from the previous three years and economic impact.

## Categorization Tiers

CFFs are organized into tiers, based on information provided in the application and these Guidelines and the published scoring rubric. Tiers are intended to group similar sizes and types of film festivals together to make it easier for both festivals and filmmakers to find their intended audiences. Tiers are not intended to be seen as a scale of differing quality of festivals; certification itself is already a mark of quality for a CFF and a tier is simply a categorization of the style and size of film festival.

If the film festival is part of a larger event or festival, the budget should be for the film festival portion only and not the overall non-film specific event. The budget should reflect annual cash expenses only and exclude in-kind contributions. As a CFF experiences changes to their festival, their tier may change as well. The IEDA reserves the right to make any modifications it deems necessary to the tiers or to the criteria by which it categorizes each tier level, including to accommodate any changes in the law or to the IEDA's funding.

- Picture Palace Tier
  - Large number of attendees with wide-reaching audiences come from outside of the immediate community
  - Have industry representatives present at the festival
  - Have awards
  - Offer broad content including workshops, panels, and networking events
  - Large budget: At or over \$50,000
  - Support from a minimum of 5 different sponsors
- Electric Theater Tier
  - Middling number of attendees with some reach outside of the immediate community
  - May or may not have industry representatives present
  - Have awards
  - Offer some workshops or panels
  - Middling budget: At or over \$20,000
  - Support from a minimum of 5 different sponsors
- Movie House Tier
  - Small number of attendees with audiences that primarily come from immediate community, or film festival is a portion of a larger event or festival
  - May or may not have awards
  - May or may not have workshops or panels
  - Small budget: Less than \$20,000

## Applicant Requirements

The applicant must satisfy the eligibility requirements for the Program set forth herein, including as specified under the headings “Eligible Applicants” and “Eligibility Requirements” below. The applicant will be responsible for submitting the Annual Report and, if awarded certification, will be legally obligated to the terms of an agreement to be executed with the IEDA, as well as the requirements of these Guidelines. A single individual must be selected to serve as the authorized official for certification, acting as the legal representative for the film festival.

### Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants must be an active entity registered and in good standing with the Iowa Secretary of State operating a [film festival](#) headquartered in Iowa and that otherwise meets the requirements of the Program and these Guidelines. Eligible applicants must be in full compliance with all federal, state and local laws at the time of application.

### Ineligible Applicants

Ineligible applicants include the following types of entities.

- Individuals
- Units of state or federal government
- Religious organizations, labor unions, political parties or national service/professional organizations
- Entities that have received grants, loans, or other incentives through the Iowa Arts Council or Iowa Economic Development Authority that are not in compliance with reporting or other requirements or that are listed on the IEDA’s funding moratorium list.

### Eligibility Requirements

Other eligibility requirements to become a CFF are listed below.

- Applicant's film festival must fit this [definition of film festival](#) for purposes of these Guidelines. [Awards shows](#), contests, premieres, or screening events are not eligible.
- Festival must be a recurring event not in its first year.
- Festival must have insurance sufficient, in the sole discretion of the IEDA, to cover the event.
- Festival must use an unbiased and juried submission process. Persons responsible for the selection of films for the festival, the scoring or judging of films, and the making of any awards to films or filmmakers, must be free of any conflicts that would prevent them from executing their duties impartially and without bias, including having any personal or financial interest in the selection or award process.
- Festival must be listed in Produce Iowa [Production Directory](#).

## Online Application Submission

Applicants for CFF certification must submit applications via the Iowa Arts Council's SlideRoom, an online application portal. Applications will not be accepted in any other format. Late, incomplete or ineligible applications will not be accepted. Applicants can access the current online application requirements at [iowaarts council.slideroom.com](http://iowaarts council.slideroom.com). Applicants must create a login to view the full application requirements for the program. For assistance related to online submission of the application, visit the [SlideRoom Help Center](#).

## Certification Review Process

### Application Eligibility Review

IEDA staff will review completed applications to assess eligibility and adherence to these published Guidelines. The IEDA may contact applicants if any additional information or clarification is required. New information or clarification submitted after a Program deadline is not considered unless the information or clarification has been requested by the IEDA. IEDA staff will also review an applicant's record of compliance and good standing with the IEDA and other State of Iowa agencies, including the Iowa Department of Revenue.

Staff will not move applications or applicants determined to be ineligible, incomplete or not in compliance with applicable law, rules, and these Guidelines, forward to categorization review. The IEDA encourages applicants to refrain from contacting staff for application status updates. A determination of ineligibility, incompleteness, or failure to comply with law, rules, or these Guidelines is final agency action. The IEDA may decline any application or revoke any certification in the event the CFF or individuals and entities involved in operating and managing the festival commit any act which brings the IEDA into public disrepute, contempt, scandal or ridicule, or otherwise fail to uphold the values of the Program or the IEDA.

### Categorization Review

Applications determined to be eligible and that are complete and that adhere to Program requirements will move on to the categorization review phase. During this phase, applicants will be categorized in different tiers of film festivals based on the information provided in the application, following these Guidelines. Recommendations for certification and approval are submitted to the Director of the Iowa Arts Council and the IEDA Director.

### Decision Notification

The IEDA will notify each applicant's authorized official whether their festival has been certified and which tier of categorization the festival will receive within eight weeks of submission. A determination of certification is final agency action. Unsuccessful applicants may request feedback after the decision notification and may reapply in future rounds.

## Application Questions

The following questions will be used to evaluate eligibility for certification. Each section has criteria that will be reviewed by IEDA staff. Application questions set out below are for reference only. Applicants must review and complete application requirements in the SlideRoom portal.

### Iowa Film Festival General Information

Does the entity have liability insurance covering the film festival event?

Yes/No/Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Mission Statement

*Enter the mission statement of the film festival or the organization behind the film festival, as applicable.*

#### Description of Film Festival

*Describe the film festival; Including, if applicable, the theme of the film festival or what makes the film festival unique from others.*

#### Primary Purpose of Film Festival

*Choose one option from the list below to signify the single most important aspect of the film festival. While many may be important, choose the one that is the most central to the mission of the film festival.*

- *Workshops and professional development for filmmakers*
- *Public engagement and education through film*
- *Networking and career engagement for filmmakers*
- *Job market and opportunity to sell films for filmmakers*
- *Social events and celebration for public and/or filmmakers*
- *Awards and earning laurels for filmmakers*
- *Other: (please be specific)*

#### Standalone Event

*Choose which best describes the film festival.*

- *The film festival is a standalone event.*
- *The film festival exists within a larger event or festival.*

*>> IF THE LATTER: Please name the larger event or festival: \_\_\_\_\_*

#### Founding Year

*Enter the year the film festival was founded. Note that first year festivals are not eligible for certification.*

#### Frequency of Film Festival

*Choose how often the film festival has occurred since the founding year.*

- *Annually*
- *Every other year*
- *Twice a year*
- *Other: \_\_\_\_\_*

**Annual Expense Budget**

*Enter the annual cash expenses for the film festival's recently completed year. Round to the nearest dollar. Do not include decimals or commas.*

**Budget Explanation (Optional)**

*Additional context for the budget may be provided here, if desired.*

**Previous Year's Festival Date(s)**

*Enter the date(s) during which the previous year's festival occurred.*

**Previous Year's Festival Town(s)**

*Enter the town(s) where the previous year's festival occurred.*

**Film Festival Support**

*Describe support that the film festival receives, including:*

- *Number of unique sponsors that currently support the film festival. Do not include the Iowa Arts Council or Produce Iowa, but other state offices may be counted.*
- *Number of volunteers involved with running the film festival. This number may be estimated and may include board members, if applicable.*

**Iowa Film Festival Submission Process****Jury Process**

*Explain the jury process for the film festival, including:*

- *How are the films submitted for consideration*
- *If there is a panel or jury, how panel or jury members are selected and trained*
- *How are the films selected for festival screening*
- *How are the films selected to receive an award, if applicable, what efforts the film festival uses to ensure an unbiased selection process*

**Awards Ceremony**

*Does the film festival have awards for the screened films?*

Yes/No

**Iowa Film Festival Attendance Details****Average Attendance**

*Enter the typical attendance for the film festival event. This may be estimated and should be for the whole event, if the event is multiple days.*

**Non-Local Attendees**

*Enter the percentage of attendees that come from outside of a 100-mile radius to attend the film festival, if known.*

**Industry Representatives**

*Describe any representation present at the film festival by industry professionals, such as speakers, distribution agents, and national or international film professionals that attending filmmakers can network with. If there are none or it is unknown, state "none" or "unknown."*

**Iowa Film Festival Content Details****Next Year's Festival Date(s)**

*Enter the date(s) on which next year's festival will occur. Approximate if necessary.*

**Next Year's Festival Location(s)**

*Enter the location(s) where next year's festival will occur. Approximate if necessary.*

**Number of Screens**

*Enter the number of screens that the festival utilizes for screening films.*

**Content Types**

*Check all the types of content that exist at the festival.*

*Workshops / Panels / Networking or social events / Awards ceremonies / Q&As with filmmakers after screenings / Other: \_\_\_\_\_*

**Content Description (Optional)**

*If desired, describe next year's film festival, including information such as: notable workshops or panels, a theme, notable attendees, etc.*

**Assistance Needed**

*Explain the top needs that the film festival has. If the film festival becomes certified, how can the CFF Network help?*

**Media Upload**

Submit 3-5 media samples that directly relate to the film festival. Media samples should demonstrate the quality of the film festival. Media samples must represent the events that occur at the film festival. Media samples do not include bios, testimonials, news articles or marketing material such as brochures, fliers or posters.

- Provide 3-5 items.
- Video and audio files should not exceed three minutes each.
- PDF files should not exceed five pages each.
- Staff will not be required to view more than five pages of a document or more than three minutes of an audio or video file.

**Allowed Media Types:**

- Images (up to 5MB each)
- Video (up to 250MB each)
- Audio (up to 30MB each)
- PDFs (up to 10MB each)
- External media from YouTube, Vimeo and SoundCloud

**Film Festival Certification Assurances**

1. I, as the authorizing official of the applicant, have read and understand the program guidelines.
2. I, as the authorizing official of the applicant, certify that all representations and statements made in this application are true and correct.
3. I, as the authorizing official of the applicant, understand that all information and material submitted with this application is a public record.
4. I, as the authorizing official of the applicant, certify compliance with Iowa laws prohibiting discrimination, including the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965 (Iowa Code Chapter 216).
5. I, as the authorizing official of the applicant, agree to acknowledge Produce Iowa and the Iowa Economic Development Authority's support in all materials and announcements, audio and visual, for all related activities according to published logo and credit line guidelines.
6. I, as the authorizing official of the applicant, request subscription to the Iowa Arts Council Newsletter.  
Yes/No
7. Authorizing Official Name
8. Authorizing Official Title

**Glossary of Terms and Definitions**

Applicants should refer to the [Grant Terms & Definitions](#) for clarification of program terms and definitions.