CHICKEN & EGG FILMS

2027 (Egg)celebrator Lab Program & Application Guide

Updated March 4, 2026

About this document

This PDF serves as a comprehensive guide to our (Egg)celerator Lab program. Use it to learn more about how the program works. The guide also functions as a step-by-step support for you as you apply for the program.

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About the program

The (Egg)celerator Lab supports nonfiction filmmakers or filmmaking teams working on their first or second feature-length documentary.

In this year-long program, filmmakers receive:
- $40,000 USD in grant funding for the production of their feature-length film
- Mentorship with Chicken & Egg Films team members
- Two creative retreats focused on career building and creative development
- Tailored industry meetings and funder connections
- Peer support from their cohort

The (Egg)celerator Lab is generously supported by the New York Community Trust, and through general operating support from our wonderful community of donors and grantmakers.

Applicant eligibility

Filmmakers must meet the following criteria:

1. **Identify as a woman or gender-expansive filmmaker.**
   - Our working definition of gender-expansive is that it is an umbrella term that includes any person whose gender identity or gender expression does not comply with the socially defined gender norms and roles of their culture. This includes, but is not limited to, non-binary, trans, third gender/two-spirit, and agender individuals). Please refer to our gender expansion page for more information.

2. **Be directing their first or second feature-length (48 minutes or longer) documentary film (hybrid docs are eligible).** See the FAQ on our website for Chicken & Egg's definitions of first-time and second-time directors.

3. **Be based anywhere in the world, except for countries/regions which are under comprehensive US sanctions.** Further information about US sanctions can be found here.

Project eligibility

Applicants to this grant must submit a project for consideration that meets the following criteria:

1. **Must be a documentary or nonfiction film - hybrid documentaries are eligible.** VR, interactive, branded content, or fiction films are not eligible.

2. **Must be intended as a feature-length (48 minutes or longer) film.** Short/medium-length films or series are not eligible.

3. **Must be in early to mid-production at the time of applying.** We recommend that you have between 10-60% of your footage shot by the date of application.

4. **Must be independently produced.** Works-for-hire and student films produced in an undergraduate or graduate program are not eligible. If you started a film in school and are now independently working on the project, we can consider your film for the Lab.

Project eligibility

- **You do not need a fiscal sponsor to apply for this program.** However, if you are awarded, you must secure a US fiscal sponsor or be a 501(c)(3) to receive the funds. If granted, we can help advise on finding a fiscal sponsor. We require prompt response upon communication of results. If granted, there is a 12-week period following notification in which you must secure a fiscal sponsor, and the grant must be disbursed within 2027.

- **You cannot apply with the same project for both the Research & Development Grant and the (Egg)celerator Lab in the same year.** We will disqualify your Lab application without review if you have also applied for the R&D grant with the same project in the same year. These opportunities fund different stages of a project.

- **Please only apply with the one project that you feel is the best fit for this program.** Read our guidelines and look at past films we have supported to get an idea of our interests. If you cannot choose between two projects, email us at egglab_opencall@chickeneggfilms.org for our advice. This advice will not impact your application.

First-time vs. second-time director

A **first-time director** has never completed a feature-length documentary film and is currently working on their first feature-length documentary/nonfiction film.

A **second-time director** has already completed and premiered one feature-length documentary film and is currently working on their second feature-length documentary film. If a director has completed and premiered one feature-length documentary film and currently has one or more works-in-progress, the project they submit will still be considered their second feature as long as it has not been completed or premiered.

You are still considered a first- or second-time director even if you have the following experience:
- You have directed multiple shorts or a web series
- You have directed feature-length narrative film(s)
- You have produced feature-length documentary film(s)

Project stage: early-to-mid production

As a general guideline, you are in a sweet spot to apply if you have shot between 10–60% of anticipated footage for your film.

If you are still in development/pre-production, then your application will likely not be as competitive within the pool. Similarly, if you are in late production and/or aiming to reach the rough cut stage by the end of 2026 or by the first quarter of 2027, your project is most likely too advanced.

Only projects in production are eligible to apply because we want to ensure that we have the greatest opportunity possible to make an impact on the production of the project and on the development of the director's career during the program year. That said, we understand production timelines are dependent on many factors and may change from what you indicate in your application.

Current work sample requirements

Length

- Should be 7-20 minutes of material from the project with which you are applying.

- We encourage applicants not to spend extra resources creating a brand new sample for this application if they already have one they have been using to apply to other funding opportunities.

- If your current sample is longer than the maximum length of 20 minutes, you can provide time codes to the portion of the sample that you would like reviewers to watch and that best reflects your intended style and approach and that you would like to highlight.

Content

- Can consist of a combination of 2-3 scene selects/ excerpts, character strands, and a trailer/teaser/sizzle reel. Submitting a trailer alone will not be competitive. We encourage first-time filmmakers to ensure that their work samples include constructed scene selects/ excerpts.

- Scenes/excerpts do not need to be in chronological order. We encourage you to put your strongest material first, since first round reviewers are required to watch up to the first 10 minutes of the project sample. Work samples will be viewed in full in subsequent rounds.

Notes on prior work samples

The purpose of a prior work sample is to give us a sense of the director's visual style, storytelling ability, ambition, and follow-through. We encourage you to prioritize submitting documentary/nonfiction as prior work.

First-time feature directors:
- Prior work sample is optional
- Prior work sample can be of any length or genre, but should be something that you have directed or co-directed
- Do not include commercial work or PSAs as prior work

Second-time feature directors:
- Must submit the first feature-length documentary film that you directed or co-directed as your prior work
- You can optionally submit 2 additional prior works (of any length or genre) that you have directed or co-directed (this includes student films)

Co-directing teams (first-time/second-time director + more experienced director):
- The prior work sample submitted should be work from the woman or gender-expansive director who is directing their first or second feature documentary.

Budget requirements

- Each application must upload a current budget formatted via PDF or Excel.

- Your budget should address the following film production costs: crew salaries, equipment, travel and housing expenses, post-production, office and admin costs, music, and legal fees. We should be able to follow your budget in tandem with your narrative material.

- Include a line item for directors' and producers' salaries.

- Provide budget notes for any areas that may be viewed as out of the ordinary or require further explanation.

- If you don't already have a budget and would like some guidance on how to create one, we recommend reading this article (2025 Introduction to Documentary Budgeting and Scheduling)

- We welcome you including additional line items such as mental health support for yourself, your team members, and your participants, as well as caregiver support that you might need.

Evaluation criteria

Priority will be given to films committed to creating social change and/or uplifting underrepresented stories that challenge mainstream narratives. We support a broad range of issues from the personal to the political that explore a variety of artistic approaches, such as personal, experimental, animated, essayistic, archival, and beyond.

Evaluation criteria

1. Subject matter and positionality: The project explores compelling and clear subject matters, themes, and questions, with an awareness of their relevance to our current moment. The story and/or approach aligns with Chicken & Egg Films' mission and challenges mainstream narratives, conversations, or perceptions. The director demonstrates critical thinking and reflects on their own perspective and biases regarding the subject matter and approach

2. Story and concept: The film features a clear and compelling narrative trajectory or concept, including character arcs where applicable. The director acknowledges the elements that remain unknown and outlines how they will address these gaps. They express a vision for weaving together various elements and arcs into a cohesive and engaging feature.

3. Artistic approach: The project shows a distinct and compelling creative vision which conveys a confident directorial voice. The work sample reflects the intended story, style, subject matter, and other project elements. The sample evokes an emotional response and conveys a tone that enhances the storytelling, demonstrating strong use of visuals, sound, music, pacing, and editing.

4. Feasibility: The application outlines realistic and appropriate activities and a timeline that aligns with the film's concept and artistic vision. It includes a carefully considered fundraising plan, and the budget is appropriate, reflecting the needs of the proposed activities and timeline.

5. Access and accountability: The director articulates their access and connection to the story, its participants, and the community involved. They welcome and integrate community feedback and thoughtfully implement processes for accountability that consider physical, mental, cultural safety and beyond. Furthermore, the director reflects on the potential impacts and consequences of the filmmaking process on participants, audiences, crew, and other stakeholders during and after filming.

Accessibility

If you require technical assistance to navigate the application platform due to a disability, please contact egglab_opencall@chickeneggfilms.org. We kindly ask that you make your request for assistance as soon as possible, no later than Wednesday, April 22, 2026.

Application guide

What follows is a reference of the contents of the application. You must first complete the eligibility form via the <u>SurveyMonkey Apply website</u>.

→If eligible, the rest of the application sections will appear for your to fill out.

→If not eligible, you will not see the rest of the application, and will receive an email notification that you are not eligible.

Do not wait until the deadline to fill out the eligibility form.

Applications must be submitted through the online platform

List of Application Questions

Questions from Nonfiction Core Application 3.1:

Project Title

Logline

Film Summary *(250-750 words)*

Artistic Approach *(250-750 words)*

Connection and Point of View *(125-250 words)*

Accountability & Community Care *(125-250 words)*

Safety and Security *(50-100 words) (optional)*

Creative Control

Key Creative Personnel *(50-100 words per bio)*

Project Stage and Timeline *(50-100 words)*

Fundraising Strategy *(50-100 words)*

Funding Detail *(50-100 words)*

Comprehensive Line-item Expense Budget

Current Work Sample

Prior Work Sample

Supplemental Questions:

Co-directorship, please elaborate *(100 words)*
(required if project is co-directed)

Access to Story/Participants *(125-250 words)*

Change Statement *(125-250 words)*

Prior Applicants *(200 words) (optional)*

Forums and Markets *(200 words)*

Estimated Film Budget

Total Funding Received to Date

Budget Narrative *(500 words)*

Project Still

Outreach Questions

Contact Information

Instructions: Please add your information. For co-directing teams, all directors must be added as a contact. If you have a producer(s), please also add them as a contact.

You can add only up to 3 contacts (directors, producers, co-producers) on the application. For additional team members (e.g. DPs, editors) or advisors/consultants, please add their names/bios in the Additional Bios question of the application.

Please make sure that contact information is valid through November 2026.

Contact Information

First Name

Last Name

Phone Number (include country and city code)

Personal Email

Work Email

Preferred Email (dropdown)

    Personal

    Work

Mailing Address

Mailing City

Mailing Zip/Postal Code

Mailing State/Province

Mailing Country (dropdown list)

Birthdate (MM/DD/YYYY)

Role on the Film (dropdown)

    Director,

    Co-director

    Producer

    Co-Producer

Nationality

Nationality 2 (Optional)

Bio

Personal Website URL (Optional)

Demographic Information

We recognize that questions around social identities cannot capture the full complexity of who we are in the world. While understanding this inherent limitation, we request demographic information for a number of reasons: to understand if we are reaching a diverse range of filmmakers, to understand intersecting identities that impact you as a filmmaker, to create an experience of belonging in our programs, and to include in grant reports requested by foundations and other funders. We ask a series of questions that both allow for open-ended self-identification as well as standardized responses to report on demographics.

✳ See the questions on the next three pages - please note that we ask these demographic questions for each of the contacts that are added.

Demographic Information

Do you identify as BIPOC?

BIPOC is an umbrella term that stands for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

- I identify as BIPOC
- I do not identify as BIPOC

Which describes your race/ethnicity? (dropdown)

Arab or Middle Eastern or North African

Asian or Asian American (including South, East, and Southeast Asia)

Black or African American or African

Hispanic or Latinx/Latina/Latino

Indigenous or First Nations or American Indian or Alaska Native

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

White or Caucasian or European American

Multiple Races/Ethnicities → Please specify (textbox)

What is your race/ethnic identity? (Optional)

This question allows for self-identification of intersectional identities. You can list as many attributes as you would like to self-identity; use a comma to separate list items.
50 words

Pronouns (dropdown)

- She/her/hers
- He/him/his
- They/them/theirs
- Just my name
- Pronouns not listed → Please specify
- Use multiple pronouns → Please specify

Demographic Information

Do you consider yourself to be gender-expansive? (Dropdown)

Our working definition of gender-expansive is an umbrella term that includes any person whose gender identity or expression does not comply with the socially defined gender norms and roles of their culture. This includes, but is not limited to, non-binary, trans, third gender/two-spirit, and agender individuals). More information is provided on our gender expansion page.

- ◉ Yes - I am gender expansive.
- ◉ No - I am not gender expansive.

As we have embarked on extending our eligibility to all gender expansive applicants, we would like to better understand who we are serving. If you selected that you are gender-expansive in the previous question, you have the option to elaborate on what this means to you, to the extent that you are comfortable. This is not a required question and is completely optional.

Please note: We recognize that each individual's experience and relationship to their own gender is complex and deeply personal. We also understand that how one chooses to identify or express their gender is multi-faceted and does not fit squarely within any definition that we provide. Please note that what you share here, if you choose to do so, will not be made public.

No word limit

Demographic Information

Which gender identity or identities do you use? (check any that apply):
- [ ] Woman - Cis (or cisgender)
- [ ] Woman - Trans (or transgender)
- [ ] Man - Cis (or cisgender)
- [ ] Man - Trans (or transgender)
- [ ] Transfeminine
- [ ] Transmasculine
- [ ] Non-binary
- [ ] Genderfluid
- [ ] Gender nonconforming
- [ ] Third gender/Two Spirit
- [ ] Agender (I do not identify with any gender)
- [ ] Personal gender identity → Please specify
- [ ] Prefer not to say

Is there anything else you would like to share about your gender identity or gender expression?
This question allows for self-identification of intersectional identities.
50 words

Do you identify as LGTBQIA+?
- ( ) Yes, I identify as LGTBQIA+
- ( ) No, I do not identify as LGTBQIA+
- ( ) I prefer not to answer

Do you have a disability?
- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No
- ( ) I prefer not to answer

Additional Bios

Provide brief biographies for other key personnel beyond directors/producers, if attached. This includes cinematographer, editor, executive producer, etc.

For each team member, include information about relevant expertise and the individual's role in the project. Bullet list names and titles of any confirmed advisors who are attached. If you do not have other team members at the moment, please write N/A.

You do not need to include bios of director(s) or producer(s) here. They should be added to the contact record via the 'Add Contact' button.

50-100 words per bio

Project information

Project title: Please do not include quotation marks on your title. If the project does not have a title, please name it as: Untitled (dir. Your Name)

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

Co-directorship: Is the project co-directed? (Yes/No)
If yes: How did you start working together? How do you approach this collaboration as co-directors?
100 words

Film Summary : 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.
250-750 words

Connection and Point of View: 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?
125-250 words

Access to Story/Participants: Please describe your level of access to your subject matter, lead participant(s), or organization/institution(if applicable).
125-250 words

Safety and Security (optional): 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.
50-100 words

Project information

Accountability & Community Care: 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
125-250 words

Project stage and timeline: 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. (Note: Keep in mind that the program will take place from January to December 2027 If you are planning to have a rough cut by the end of this year or by the first quarter of 2027 then this program is not for you.)
50-100 words

Change statement: Documentaries have a unique ability to move and transform people. They contribute to our collective understanding of issues, people, and the way the world is constructed. They often inspire us to think differently. Chicken & Egg Films see documentaries as one of many tools that are necessary for creating narrative, cultural, and social change. We seek to support nuanced narratives that inspire individual and societal transformation for a better world.

Therefore, we want to understand what kind of change your film seeks to make. How will your film challenge mainstream narratives, conversations or perceptions? What would change as a result of the film if you are successful?Please note: we are not asking for an impact campaign idea or activities, but rather your overarching goal(s) for creating change with your film.
125-250 words

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

Project information

Artistic approach: 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?
250-750 words

Prior applicants (optional): If you have applied to the (Egg)celerator Lab previously, please share the year you applied and how your project has progressed or evolved since then. Please note any changes to story, participants, artistic approach, etc.
200 words

Forums and markets: List the forums and markets where you have participated with this project, even if there was no cash award.

Project's website (optional)

Project still: Please upload a still image that is core to your film's story line. Filename must end in either .png, .jpeg, or .jpg. Maximum file size is 10 MB.

Geographic region (select one): Please indicate the primary region where your film takes place.
Australia and Oceania
Central America and the Caribbean
East Asia and the Pacific
Eastern and Southern Africa
Europe
Middle East and North Africa
North America
South America
South and Central Asia
West and Central Africa

Subject matter 1 (dropdown)
Subject matter 2 (dropdown)
Subject matter 3 (dropdown)

Financial Information & Budget

Fundraising strategy: Describe the overall fundraising strategy for the film. *1300 characters max.*

Total Funding Received to Date: Enter the amount in U.S. dollars using just numerals (do not include commas or periods).

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). Include the percentage of the budget that each funding source represents. Example:

- Foundation A, $X, Applied - %
- Private Investment A, $X, Confirmed - %
- Foundation B, $X, To Apply - %

Estimated Film Budget: Enter the amount in U.S. dollars using just numerals. Include only costs up through completion (do not include commas or periods).

Comprehensive line-item expense budget (upload): 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 <u>A Fresh 2025 Introduction to Documentary Budgeting and Scheduling (With New Templates)</u>. Upload your current budget in the format you have. There is no need to create a new one. You can reference several budget best practices via page 14 of this guide.

Budget Narrative (optional)
If there are any budget items (e.g. accessibility, licensing, animation) or other unique circumstances that require contextualization, feel free to explain further.
500 words

Work samples

Before submitting work samples, please review pgs. 10-12 in this guide for requirements regarding current project and prior work samples.

Important notes:
- Submit only one link. If you copy several links, the link to your sample will appear to be defective.

- Review to ensure that the link and password work correctly before submitting your sample. If sharing a Google Drive link, make sure the sharing settings are set to "Anyone with link can view." The link must be subtitled in English.

- Unless you have security concerns regarding sharing footage, please make your link downloadable so that our reviewers may watch offline.

Current work sample

URL

Password: If no password is required for your link, please write "N/A" in this field. We recommend you protect your materials with a password.

Runtime: Please round to whole numbers in minutes.

Description: Specify what type of sample or combination of samples you are submitting: trailer; scene select(s) or excerpt(s); character strand(s). 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. Please provide reviewers with the time codes of the portions of the sample that best reflect your intended style and approach.
200 words

Content warnings (optional but encouraged): Please note below if the footage you have provided contains any content that may be triggering for reviewers, and the timestamps where it occurs. This information will be used as an advisory to reviewers, but has no effect on your application or the reviewing process.

Some items to flag include, for example: Violence, Bodily Harm/ Mutilation, Domestic Violence, Sexual Violence/Abuse, Suicide, Depression, Drug addiction, Alcoholism, Paedophilia, Sexual abuse, Suicide, White supremacy, Police brutality.
100 words

Prior work sample

Film title

Director name

Year completed

URL: Please provide a link to the complete film.

Password: If no password is required for your link, please write "N/A" in this field. We recommend you protect your materials with a password.

Running time: There is no time limit for your Prior Work Sample. Please provide a link to the complete film.

Festivals and Awards: Describe any recognition that your film has received via festivals, awards, etc.
100 words

Description: Describe the sample you are submitting for consideration, including its narrative, aesthetic, or communication intentions. Discuss the relevance of the work to the current project, if any. If the current project is a departure from the prior work, how will this film differ? If you wish the panel review a specific section of your prior work, note the start and end running times of a 10-minute section that you'd especially like to highlight. If the film was co-directed, specify the name of the co-director. If you are not the director, please specify your role in the completed work submitted.
200 words

Content warnings (optional but encouraged): Please note below if the footage you have provided contains any content that may be triggering for reviewers, and the timestamps where it occurs. This information will be used as an advisory to reviewers, but has no effect on your application or the reviewing process.
100 words

Outreach Questions

How long have you known about the (Egg)celerator Lab open call?
- Less than a year
- 1-3 years
- 3-6 years

How did you hear about this year's open call?
- Referred by Chicken & Egg Films team at a festival/forum
- Referred by fellow filmmaker/peer
- Chicken & Egg Films newsletter or social media
- Other industry newsletter or social media
- Other -> please specify

Questions

If you have questions that aren't answered by this guide or the FAQ, please contact egglab_opencall@chickeneggfilms.org.

We check our inbox regularly and no question is too small!