



2026 Documentary Lab Open Call Application

- **Applicant Personal Information**
 - **Optional Co-Director Personal Information**

1. Project Title

2. What is the current status of the project?

- a. **Completed Principal Production / Early Post-Production**
- b. **Reached Assembly Cut**
- c. **Reached Rough Cut**

We are currently **ONLY** accepting films that will be in post-production during the fellowship program. We are looking for projects that have completed principal production and are focusing on post.

3. Explain the current status of the project. (500 words or less)

In list form, outline the projected post-production timeline from now to the anticipated completion date. Please include major project activities, goals and the anticipated post-production schedule.

4. Logline

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

*Participants is used throughout this document, but depending on the specifics of your project you may want to refer to your participants as characters/contributors/subjects/protagonists etc.

5. Topic Summary (750 words or less)

Explain the topic, theme, context, stakes, relevance, or questions that you're exploring in your project.

6. Film Summary (750 words or less)

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.



7. Artistic Approach (750 words or less)

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?

If you plan to use generative AI to realize any part of your artistic vision, describe how. For guidance, reference the [AI Addendum](#) and [APA Guidelines](#).

8. Filmmaker Statement (250 words or less)

Explain who you are as a filmmaker, and if applicable, how this project is expanding or evolving your creative practice. What does success look like for you as an artist? What are the creative, professional, or holistic barriers and challenges you are facing?

9. Connection and Point of View (250 words or less)

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?

10. Accountability and Community Care (250 words or less)

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?

If you are using generative AI, describe what ethical considerations or practices of accountability you are employing. [This can include workflow/tracking/legal review of AI-generated materials; transparency with your participants (if applicable), assessing algorithmic bias; consideration of possible impact on the historical record; copyright issues; and assessment of the AI tools or technologies you are choosing].

For further guidance, reference [DAWG's Framework for Values, Ethics and Accountability in Nonfiction Filmmaking](#). If using GenAI, please reference the [APA Guidelines](#) and [AI Addendum](#).



11. Safety and Security [Optional] (100 words or less)

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](#).

12. Accessibility [Optional] (100 words or less)

If applicable, how do you intend to make your film and/or production accessible to D/deaf, blind/low vision, disabled, and neurodiverse crew, participants, and audiences? Please ensure that these accessibility costs (captions, audio descriptions, transcripts) are reflected in the submitted budget. For further guidance, reference the [FWD-Doc Toolkit](#) and the [FWD-Doc Engagement Pack](#).

13. Audience Consideration / Intended Impact (200 words or less)

Describe the audiences you would like your film to reach and why. How do you plan to reach and engage them? If you are using generative AI as part of your artistic approach, how do you plan to disclose it to your audience? If you don't plan to disclose the use of AI, please explain why.

Describe your vision for the influence the film will have. If relevant, what are the impact goals and strategies for your project? For further guidance, reference [The Impact Field Guide](#).

14. Key Creative Personnel (1,000 words or less)

Provide brief biographies for each key creative 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.

15. Do you have creative control and, if applicable, ownership of the project?

- a. Yes**
- b. No**
- c. Other (please explain)**

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

16. Fundraising Strategy (250 words or less)

Describe the overall fundraising strategy and who from the team will lead these efforts for the film.



17. Funding to Date and Budget

Funding to date - Include all sources and amounts raised to date. Clearly distinguish between potential sources of funding and secured amounts. List the status of other sources of funding currently under consideration, whether to be applied for or pending.

Budget - Please provide a breakdown of your project's projected expenses, from development through release, in U.S. dollars, including a budget total. Provide budget notes for any areas that may be viewed as out of the ordinary or require further explanation. Please ensure that accessibility costs (captions, audio descriptions, transcripts) are reflected in the submitted budget.

18. Current Sample/Rough Cut Link & Password

Share a password protected **DOWNLOADABLE LINK** to your Current Sample/Rough Cut. Any work samples under 20 mins will be immediately disqualified. Please double check your link & password before submitting your application.

We encourage applicants not to spend extra resources creating a sample for each individual fund. If your current sample is outside of the suggested length requirements, please provide reviewers with the time codes of the portion of the sample that best reflects your intended style and approach (e.g., 3:15-12:15).

- Post-production applications require a sample of between 20-45 minutes that demonstrates access to characters, story arc or concept, and visual treatment. If available, a rough cut submission is encouraged.

Captions or English Subtitles are required for the Current Work Sample. For further guidance on creating captions, reference [FWD-Doc Practices & Resources We Recommend](#) as well as the [NAI Captioning and Audio Description Resources](#).

Links and passwords should not expire before September 2026.

19. Current Sample/Rough Cut Description (250 words or less)

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. If your sample includes any audio, visual, or text elements generated with AI, please describe how and what tools or technologies you used.



20. Is this your first or second time directing a feature film?

a. This is my first time directing a feature length film.

b. This is my second time directing a feature length film.

(Only directors working on their first or second feature length documentary films are eligible to apply)

21. Motivation to Apply (500 words or less)

Please list any filmmaker labs, fellowships, or other artist support programs that you have completed, or are intending to participate in during the Doc Lab fellowship (now thru 2027).

In consideration of the other programs you've listed, in what ways do you hope that the Doc Lab experience will continue to help you grow? In what areas are you still looking to be supported? What progress do you hope to make with your project over the 12 months of the fellowship?

- Applicant Demographic Data

- Optional Co-Director Demographic Data