



# APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

## 2025 AFS GRANT FOR SHORT FILMS CYCLE



2024 AFS Grant recipient  
**AMANECE**  
Dir. by Julián Fernández Garnik

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2024 AFS Grant recipient  
**THE SCHOOL OF HOPE**  
Dir. by Amy Martinez



GRANTS

## APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

### 2025 AFS GRANT FOR SHORT FILMS CYCLE

#### INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLYING TO THE 2025 AFS GRANT FOR SHORT FILMS, WHICH INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUNDING:

##### **THE AFS GRANT FOR SHORT FILMS**

Request up to \$10K in funding towards

- Pre-Production
- Production
- Post-Production

##### **WITHIN THE AFS GRANT FOR SHORT FILMS CYCLE, THE FOLLOWING IN-KIND AWARDS ARE AVAILABLE:**

- MPS Camera and Lighting Award
- TBD Post Color and Conform Award

## I. AFS GRANTS OVERVIEW

The AFS Grant awards funds annually to Texas-based filmmakers working in any style or genre. The AFS Grant aims to ensure that promising Texas artists have access to funding opportunities right here in their home state. AFS is committed to providing equitable funding opportunities for artists, and filmmakers of all identities and backgrounds are encouraged to apply.

Funded by philanthropic revenue from Austin Film Society's annual Texas Film Awards and by private and institutional donations throughout the year, the AFS Grant serves to redress the loss of public funds for filmmakers by disbursing funds for production and offering travel stipends to Texas filmmakers.

AFS Grant recipients have shown their films at renowned festivals like Sundance, Berlin, Cannes, Toronto, Venice, Tribeca, Rotterdam, and SXSW; they have won Independent Spirit Awards; and they have even received nominations at the Academy Awards®.

The Austin Film Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit media arts organization. Established in 1985, the Austin Film Society makes great film and independent filmmaking accessible in Texas. The AFS Grant was started in 1996 as the Texas Filmmakers' Production Fund and was renamed the AFS Grant in 2013.





## II. APPLICATION CYCLES

The AFS Grant is administered in two application cycles, one for feature films and one for short films.

### AFS GRANT FOR SHORT FILMS CYCLE

The AFS Grant for Short Films is open to documentary, narrative, animation, and experimental film projects under 40 minutes in length and in any of the following stages of production: pre-production, production, or post-production. NOTE: Filmmakers are restricted to submitting one application per grant cycle.

The AFS Grant for Short Films deadline is **Thursday, September 4, 2025, 6 PM CT**. AFS Grant deadlines are firm, and we do not grant extensions.

*If you are looking for the Harrison McClure Endowed Film Fund, our annual grant for undergraduates at Texas universities, the application will open again in the spring of 2026.*

### AFS GRANT FOR FEATURE FILMS CYCLE

The AFS Grant for Feature Films will accept submissions for film projects 40 minutes and longer. Applications for feature films will open in the **spring of 2026**.

## III. APPLICANT AND PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

**Please review all eligibility criteria below before starting your application. Applications that do not meet eligibility criteria will not advance in the review process.**

### 1. GENERAL APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Before you can access the full application, you will be prompted to fill out an eligibility quiz to ensure you meet all AFS Grant qualifications before applying. You will be required to take this quiz before you start putting together your application materials once you've created an account in Submittable.

In order to be eligible to apply for an AFS Grant, you must meet the following requirements at the time of application. If selected to receive an AFS Grant, you may be asked to confirm your eligibility at the time of the offer.

- The AFS Grant is intended to support the artistic community in Texas and keep it thriving. **You must be a current Texas resident to apply.**
- You must be the director or co-director of the project to apply. If you have multiple directors, the “Primary Applicant” must meet all eligibility requirements.
- You can only submit one application per grant cycle, even if you’re a director of one film and a co-director of another.
- You **cannot** apply to the AFS Grant if the primary applicant is:
  - o attending school full-time outside of the state of Texas or a former Texas resident
  - o an out-of-state director working on a Texas-based film
- You cannot apply to the AFS Grant if either the director or co-director are:
  - o AFS full- or part-time staff
  - o on the AFS board of directors
  - o a current AFS Creative Careers participant
- A video sample is required for this application. See Section 6-A “Required Video Samples” for more information. If the applicant does not have at least ONE of the following to include as a video sample, they are not eligible to apply to the AFS Grant for Short Films.
  - o material from the proposed film
  - o previous work directed by the applicant
  - o work sample from other key members of the production team

## 2. PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

**A project is only eligible if it meets the following requirements for the AFS Grant:**

- o The length of all films must be projected to be less than 40 minutes.
- o All genres of film and video are eligible, except industrial or promotional pieces, music videos, and “works-for-hire.”
- o All projects must be single, stand-alone works intended to be distributed alone. Television or web series are not eligible at this time.
- o Projects must be in their pre-production, production, or post-production stage at the time of application.

***NOTE: We do not fund distribution as a separate stage of production. Distribution costs can be requested as part of a post-production ask.***



### 3. ELIGIBILITY FOR PREVIOUS GRANT RECIPIENTS

- If you have received a previous AFS Grant for the same project, you cannot apply for a second AFS Grant for that same project. This does not include AFS Travel Grants.
- If you have received a previous AFS Grant for another project, in addition to all required materials, you must include a written report demonstrating significant progress on your project since the initial AFS Grant was awarded. (Refer to page 13, “Status Report,” for details.)

## IV. APPLICANT RESPONSIBILITIES

**All applicants are required to do the following after submitting their grant application:**

- If you are awarded an AFS Grant, you are required to carry out a project consistent with the proposal submitted.
- If your project changes significantly from your proposal, you must immediately send AFS a written request to change the scope of your project before the expenditure of grant funds. Approval isn't guaranteed.

## V. WHAT YOU CAN APPLY FOR

**If eligible, applicants can apply for any of the following cash and in-kind awards in this 2025 AFS Short Films Grant cycle. Please read carefully, as some grants have their own eligibility requirements.**

### AFS GRANT FOR SHORT FILMS — CASH GRANT

Filmmakers may apply for up to \$10,000 cash for pre-production, production, or post-production through the AFS Grant for Short Films. Total cash support from the AFS Grant will not exceed \$10,000. However, applicants can apply to receive in-kind awards in addition to the \$10,000 cash grant.

***\*NOTE: We do not fund distribution as a separate stage of production. Distribution costs can be requested as part of a post-production request.***



**The following awards are in-kind awards for goods and services offered through the AFS Grant for Short Films:**

**MPS CAMERA AND LIGHTING AWARD—IN-KIND AWARD**

The MPS Camera and Lighting Award is given in the form of a multi-day camera package rental from MPS Studios with a value of up to \$10,000. The award must be used by the chosen project and cannot be transferred or sold. Grantees must meet MPS' minimum insurance requirements, and package rental is subject to availability. MPS must be acknowledged in the film's credits.

**TBD POST COLOR AND CONFORM AWARD—IN-KIND AWARD**

The TBD Post Color and Conform Award will give its recipient a finishing package that includes a color session with one of their professional, in-house colorists and a session to conform all final assets into festival deliverables, including a digital, unencrypted DCP. The award includes a final watchdown in a studio equipped with 5.1 theatrical sound in their Austin facility. The value of this package is \$12,000. One award will be granted in this cycle, and TBD Post must be acknowledged in the film's credits. Scheduling sessions will be dependent on TBD's production schedule. Please note that peak times at TBD Post are from November through March.

## VI. ONLINE INFO SESSIONS

AFS Grant program staff will offer a series of live webinars to share tips, answer frequently asked questions, and provide guidance for applicants. We strongly encourage attending a webinar if you are a first-time applicant. Because of staffing limitations, we cannot offer one-on-one grant consultations or review materials beforehand.

If you are unable to attend a webinar, a recording of the first webinar will be available on the AFS Grant webpage a week after the event. Visit our website for webinar dates, times, and registration links.



2024 AFS Grant recipient  
**BONE GUITAR**  
Dir. by Nicole Elmer



2024 AFS Grant recipient  
**THE BUSBOY**  
Dir. by William Magnuson and Max Perkins  
(Wrong Brother Productions)



2024 AFS Grant recipient  
**THE FATAL EGG**  
Dir. by Joel Mendez-Zarate

## VII. APPLICATION PREPARATION

Applying for the grant is entirely an online process. Applications and all supporting materials must be submitted via an online portal at [www.austin.org/afs-grants-applications](http://www.austin.org/afs-grants-applications). Unless marked as optional, all parts of the application are required. Please refer to the application form instructions below for more information on the required materials. See our “Tips” for advice on how to best approach each of the sections below.

### GENERAL APPLICATION TIPS:

- Don't leave your application to the last minute. It's a lot to tackle in one go, and planning ahead will work in your favor. You are able to save and edit your application before submitting it, so you don't have to complete the entire application at once.
- We highly recommend composing your application materials in a word processing document before pasting them into the application fields.
- This year, we've added word limits. Please note that they are a word maximum and not a word requirement.
- Not sure what some of the terms in our application mean? Refer to our [glossary](#).
- Consistency is key to making a strong impression. Make sure that all of the various parts of your application work together to paint a clear picture of your film and your plan for bringing it to life.
- Don't be afraid to reiterate key points throughout the application. However, make sure not to overdo it to avoid redundancy.
- If you have any questions, feel free to contact us at [filmmakersupport@austinfilm.org](mailto:filmmakersupport@austinfilm.org). Keep in mind that as the application deadline draws closer, response times will be longer. We cannot guarantee that we will respond in time before the deadline. Please plan accordingly.



## CHECKLIST IF APPLYING FOR THE AFS GRANT FOR SHORT FILMS

### Required Materials

- ☐ Online Application Questions
- ☐ Project Essays
  - ☐ Story/Content
  - ☐ Artistic Approach
  - ☐ Production Status & Plan
  - ☐ Target Audience & Distribution Strategy
  - ☐ Fundraising Strategy
  - ☐ Use & Impact of Requested Funds
  - ☐ Status Report (required of previously-funded filmmakers)
- ☐ Budget Expense Summary
- ☐ Budget Resources Summary
- ☐ Detailed Budget
- ☐ Project Timeline
- ☐ Team Bios
- ☐ Story Treatment
- ☐ Required Video Sample & Description

### Optional Materials

- ☐ Optional Video Sample & Description
- ☐ Letters of Support
- ☐ Additional Supporting Materials
- ☐ Pitch Deck or Lookbook
- ☐ Script

## VIII. APPLICATION FORM INSTRUCTIONS

The following instructions are for the AFS Grant for Short Films application, which funds either pre-production, production, or post-production funding requests. You can only submit one application per cycle. Please make sure that you have reviewed all eligibility requirements on pages 3–5 before you begin.

The application can be found at [www.austinfilm.org/AFS-Grants-Application](http://www.austinfilm.org/AFS-Grants-Application) or under the “Artist Development” menu on the AFS home page.

In order to apply, you will need to create a Submittable account. This is the application system that AFS uses for the AFS Grant for Short Films. If you have previously registered for Submittable, you will be able to use the same account for the Austin Film Society’s application. Once you begin the application process, you will be able to save and edit your application before officially submitting it.

### SECTION 1 - GENERAL INFORMATION

**Fill out this section in its entirety. Here are a few things to note:**

- Primary Applicants must meet all eligibility requirements. (See Section III “Applicant and Project Eligibility” for project, director, and co-director requirements.)
- To add information about co-directors, a second name field will appear once you answer “Yes” to “Are you applying with a co-director?”
- Upload one of the following acceptable forms of proof of Texas residency:
  - o A Texas voter registration card (NOTE: A passport, Texas driver’s license, or state-issued identification card do NOT qualify as proof of residency.)
  - o A recent utility bill with your name and your Texas address
  - o Current student registration at a Texas college or university

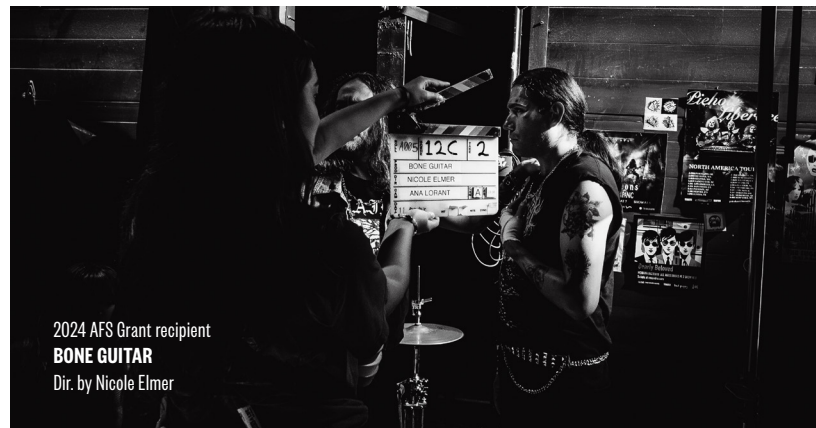
## SECTION 2 - PROJECT INFORMATION

- **Project Title** Feel free to use a working title if you know the title will change.
- **Project Logline (50 words max)** See our [glossary](#) for more information.
- **Brief Project Summary (75 words max)** Write a brief project summary or synopsis that best captures your film's story or intent.
- **Has the project received an AFS Grant in the past?** If so, you will need to include the year and project title for the film.
- **Has either the director or co-director of this project previously received any AFS funding?** Check all that apply for this and previous projects.
- **Project Website** If a website exists for your film, please include it here. Social media accounts are accepted as well.
- **Project Length** Fill out a runtime for your film, even if it is an estimate or projection.
- **Format:** Please select whether your film is a Narrative Short, Documentary Short, Animated Narrative Short, Animated Documentary Short, or an Experimental Short.
- **Stage Applying For Funding** You can only apply for one stage of production. Since we do not fund distribution as its own grant category, you can include some distribution activities in a post-production request.
- **Does the project have a producer or producers attached?** If you are directing and producing the proposed film, do not add your name in this field.





2024 AFS Grant recipient  
**AMANECE**  
Dir. by Julián Fernández Garnik



2024 AFS Grant recipient  
**BONE GUITAR**  
Dir. by Nicole Elmer

## SECTION 3 - GRANT AND AWARD REQUEST

### A. Budget Total

Fill this in after completing your Detailed Budget. This total should match your totals in Section 5.

### B. Cash Awards

Use this section to state the amount of funding that you are requesting and to opt into specific cash awards if you are eligible for them.

- **Total Cash Request Amount:** Your AFS Grant cash request should not exceed \$10,000. Your total cash request should only include cash, not in-kind totals.
- **Briefly explain why you are requesting this amount (75 words max):**  
Be specific, but keep your responses short and concise. You can provide further context in Section 4 “Project Essays.”

### C. In-Kind Awards

Use this section to opt into any in-kind awards that fit your project’s needs. You must request a cash award in order to be eligible for in-kind awards. (See Section IV “What You Can Apply For” for more information.)

- MPS Camera and Lighting Award
  - o Opt into this in-kind award to be considered for a multi-day camera package rental from MPS Studios with a value of up to \$10,000.
  - o Keep in mind that you will have to meet MPS’ minimum insurance requirements.
  - o Briefly explain how you would use the MPS Camera and Lighting Award.
- TBD Post Color and Conform Award
  - o Opt into this in-kind award to be considered for a color session and conforming of final assets into festival deliverables. Limitations apply.
  - o Scheduling sessions will be dependent on TBD’s production schedule. Please note that peak times at TBD Post are from November through March.



## SECTION 4: PROJECT ESSAYS AND ATTACHMENTS

### A. PROJECT ESSAYS

Please complete each essay prompt with information about your project. We've copied each prompt directly from the application and have included additional instructions and guidelines in the bullets corresponding to each prompt below.

#### PROJECT ESSAY AND ATTACHMENT TIPS:

- Clarity and brevity are key. You want to keep your reviewer's attention as they read your materials.
- Have a friend or colleague read your answers so you can make sure you're being as clear and concise as possible.
- Check all word limits before starting your essays. Keep in mind that these are word limits, not word requirements.

#### Story / Content (300 words max)

*Please describe the content of your film, introducing key characters or subjects, essential story beats, and any major themes you are exploring. Make sure to state the format (documentary, narrative, experimental, animation), the genre, and the intended tone of the film.*

- Tell your story in a clear and engaging way. Stick to the main points. You can expand on the full plot or story details in your Story Treatment.
- Introduce key characters or subjects and, using the active voice, describe what they're doing and why.
- Describe the obstacles your characters face, how they overcome them (or don't), and how everything ties into the themes, ideas, critiques, or issues that you're exploring.
- Don't be afraid to give away the ending. The reviewer needs to know the story that they're funding.

#### Artistic Approach (350 words max)

*Explain what inspired the film, why it should get made, and why you're the best person to direct it. Provide details about the stylistic approach you're taking. Share details about your visual goals and other artistic choices like (but not limited to) the following: pacing, sound design, and visual effects.*

- Share your passion for this story and why you're the right person to make this project.
- Feel free to share personal connections or experiences to show the depth and authenticity of your proposal.
- Tell us how you're going to translate this story into visual language so that the reviewer knows what they will actually see in the finished film.
- Explain your visual goals and how these choices support your film. Do you plan to use static or moving shots, specific color palettes, or framing? If you're making a documentary, do you plan to utilize vérité, talking heads, or archival material?
- Talk about your influences. Avoid sounding derivative by emphasizing your unique vision for the film's aesthetics.



2024 AFS Grant recipient  
**POSTER BOY**  
Dir. by India Opzomer



2024 AFS Grant recipient  
**THE RED DOOR**  
Dir. by Mauricio Hernandez

### Production Status and Plan (250 words max)

*Where are you currently in the production process, and what do you still have ahead of you?*

*Please provide any insight about your plans to bring your film to fruition.*

- Let us know where you are currently in the process. Are you about to start casting with the hopes of filming in the next two months? Are you 14 weeks into your post-production schedule but need a little more time with your documentary subject to finalize the ending of your story?
- Describe how you're going to make everything happen for your film.
- Consider any resource limitations or specific needs. Let us know what or who you have access to.
- Cross-check your production plan to ensure consistency across your materials. For example, if you say that you will be traveling to Australia for six weeks, the cost of travel should appear in your budget, and travel plans should be listed in your Project Timeline.

### Target Audience and Distribution Strategy (250 words max)

*How do you plan to distribute the film when it is complete? Which audience(s) are you hoping to reach, and how do you plan to reach them?*

- Show that you've put thought into your film's audience and how you'll reach them. Will you submit to film festivals, post your film online, or are you pursuing another creative route?
- Are there communities or audiences – either niche or mainstream – who you hope to reach?
- Outline your distribution strategy and goals, and tell us your backup plans if the best-case scenarios don't work out.
- Pay close attention to festival deadlines so that your timeline matches the distribution goals communicated here.

## Fundraising Strategy (250 words max)

*How do you plan to raise your production budget?*

- Tell us what types of fundraising avenues you plan to pursue and where you are in the fundraising process.
- We want to see that you've got a realistic plan to pay for this production.

## Use and Impact of Requested Funds (250 words max)

*How will AFS Grant funds be used if granted, and how will the amount requested advance this project and your career?*

- Provide a written explanation of how the requested funds will be used.
- Paying yourself is a completely valid use of funds, which we encourage.
- If your budget is over \$500,000, you will have to let us know why AFS Grant funding will benefit your project and how the requested funds will move it forward.

## Status Report (250 words max)

*Required for past AFS Grant recipients only. Please provide an update on previously funded project(s).*

- Explain any progress that you have made since receiving funding.
- Explain your anticipated timeline.
- If your previously funded projects were completed, please let us know when and where they premiered and any screenings or distribution outlets to note.

## B. PROJECT ATTACHMENTS

The materials below must be uploaded to your online application as PDFs. Individual PDF files can not exceed 10MB. Please use the following naming convention for each upload:

**Project Name\_Last Name\_Attachment Name.pdf**

### Project Timeline (1 page max)

*Upload a project timeline above. It must not exceed 1 page.*

- Outline the key stages of your production with the time allotted to each and anticipated dates. It's helpful to see these in a bulleted list.
- The timeline should cover the project from its development all the way through distribution, regardless of the stage of production for which you are applying for funding.
- While specific dates aren't required, please include the month/year of key activities or events so reviewers can see what's been accomplished and what's to come.

### Team Bios (1 page max)

*Upload bios for you and your key creative team. Must not exceed 1 page.*

- Write up to 1 page detailing the bios for you and your key creative team.
- Make sure to include their names and roles on the project.



### Story Treatment (3 pages max)

A story treatment is required for every project and must be included with your application. Not to exceed 10 pages. NOTE: We are not looking for visual treatments, lookbooks, or pitch decks in this section. You can include those in Section 7 “Optional Materials” if you haven’t shot your film yet.

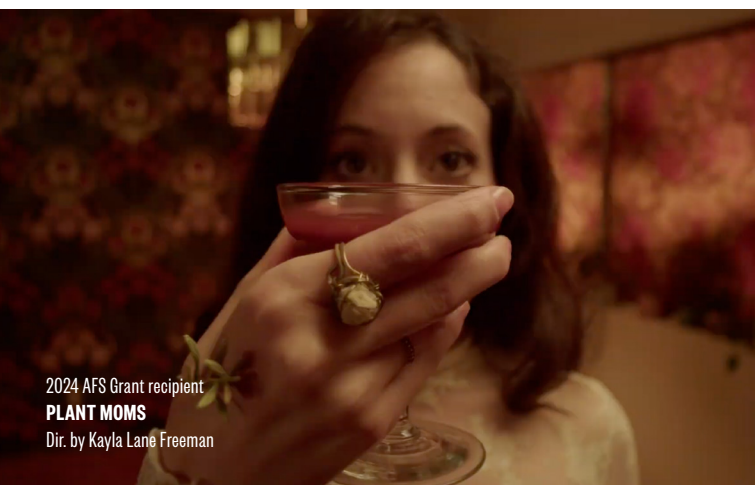
- The goal of the story treatment is to provide a detailed summary of a screenplay, documentary, or film project.
- Write a story treatment focusing entirely on the story and characters or subjects.
- Walk us through each act as if we’re watching the story unfold on screen.
- Still not sure what a treatment is? Refer to the definition in our [glossary](#) for more details.

### SECTION 5 - BUDGETS

Once you have created your detailed budget for Section 5-C, use the following two tables to list your project’s expenses and resources. Please enter your specific budget numbers in the blank fields in the table. **Do not include dollar signs or other symbols as they will not allow the built-in formulas to work.** Your “Total Expenses” should be equal to your “Total Resources.”

#### GENERAL BUDGET TIPS:

- While there are no hard budget limits, we are looking to fund projects where the AFS Grant will make a meaningful impact, so be sure to show us where you need support.
- If your resources don’t match your expenses, check your math because something is off. It’s a sign that you’re either planning to overspend or raise more money than you need.



## A. BUDGET EXPENSE SUMMARY

Summarize the expense totals of each production phase (pre-production, production, and distribution) from your detailed budget, regardless of what stage you are currently in or the stage in which you are applying for funding.

- “Cash” in Column B refers to expenses that require direct monetary payment.
- “In-kind” in Column D refers to goods or services that are donated to your production. Visit our [glossary](#) for a full definition.
- Your total expenses in this summary should equal the total of your budget resources summary below.

	A	B	C	D
1		Cash	In-Kind	Total
2	Pre-production			0
3	Production			0
4	Post-production			0
5	Distribution			0
6				
7	TOTAL EXPENSES	0	0	0

## B. BUDGET RESOURCES SUMMARY

Please enter the amount of funds or the value of in-kind resources that you will acquire in order to cover your budget expenses. List out how much money you have raised, or hope to raise, and from what sources.

Input any amounts that have already been secured into the “Actual” column (Column B) and amounts that you hope to secure into the “Anticipated” column (Column C). **Do not include dollar signs or other symbols, as they will prevent the built-in formulas from working.**

You are able to add your own resource descriptions in Rows 16-20. This can include any specific grants that you have received or that you hope to receive.

- Your “Budget Resources Summary” should be specific about your plans to seek resources within and outside of the AFS Grant.
- List all resource totals, including your own contributions, in-kind donations, grants, individual and corporate donations, sponsors, investors, and crowdfunding campaigns. See our [glossary](#) for what we mean by investors.
- Most resource totals can be kept in the categories in each row, but we highly recommend listing individual grants you’ve already received funding from and those you plan on applying to.

- Not all resource categories will be relevant to your production, so feel free to omit the unnecessary ones.
- If one of your resources is a crowdfunding campaign, set yourself up for success by setting achievable crowdfunding goals and staying away from unrealistic or overly ambitious targets.
- Your “Total Resources” should equal your “Total Expenses.”

	A	B	C	D
1	TOTAL RESOURCES:			0
2				
3		Actual	Anticipated	Total
4	Cash			0
5	AFS Grant Cash Request			0
6	Private Donors			0
7	Investors			0
8	Crowdfunding			0
9	Credit Cards			0
10	Fundraising Events			0
11	AFS MPS Camera and Lighting Award (up to \$10,000 in-kind)			0
12	Stuck On On DCP In-Kind Award			0
13	Other In-Kind			0
14				
15	Other Resources (list below)			
16				0
17				0
18				0
19				0
20				0
22				0
23				0
24				0
25				0
26				
27	TOTAL RESOURCES:	0	0	0





2024 AFS Grant recipient  
**AMANECE**  
Dir. by Julián Fernández Garnik

### C. DETAILED BUDGET

Upload a detailed budget using either your own format or our template here: [AFS Blank Detailed Budget Form](#). It must not exceed 3 pages. Please check your PDF for legibility before uploading.

- Provide a detailed budget that includes costs for all phases of production — pre-production, production, and post-production — regardless of what stage you’re applying for funding with.
- You may use an existing budget sheet or download our template from our website. Not all line items in our template will be relevant to your production, so feel free to omit the unnecessary ones.
- Export a PDF and ensure your export is legible and appropriately scaled onto the page. Please make sure that your columns or rows are not cut off across various pages.

#### DETAILED BUDGET TIPS:

- Complete your “Detailed Budget” first so that your cash request is backed up by numbers you’ve calculated for your entire film: pre-production through distribution. You don’t want to lay out a proposal in the “Project Essays” that your other materials do not support. For example, if you describe a cinematic vision with a lot of Steadicam moves, but the budget has none of that priced out, the project’s execution might seem unrealistic.
- Keep your rates reasonable and aligned with the scale of your overall budget. For example, if your budget total is \$8,000 and you are not paying your actors or crew, list their “in-kind” services at a rate in scale with your budget (say \$100/day), not at full union rates.
- “In-kind” refers to any goods or services that are donated outright. For example, if a friend is loaning you a camera for the shoot, you would place a value on the use of the camera and list it in the in-kind column, likewise with donated time on the part of your cast and crew.
- Not sure what to pay your crew? Research by asking people for their rates, searching online, and consulting with indie producers.
- Be sure to double-check your math and balance your budget.

## SECTION 6 - VIDEO SAMPLES

### A. REQUIRED VIDEO SAMPLE (6 minutes max)

*Your Required Video Sample is the most important part of your application. Please allow ample time for your upload to process and for the re-exporting of files that may be over the size limit.*

#### Technical Requirements

*The required video sample is uploaded directly into the online application form and must satisfy the following requirements:*

- Have a total runtime of 6 minutes or less
- Be uploaded as an .mp4 in 1080p resolution that is no larger than 400MB
- Samples can consist of different scenes or clips, but you must submit one continuous video piece. Feel free to use brief title cards between segments or separate clips by fading to black.

#### What to Include in Your Required Video Sample

Your Required Video Sample should give the review panel a sense of what your completed, proposed project will be like, so think strategically about how you will curate it. Below is AFS's order of preference, starting with the highest priority for what to include in your required work sample. You may choose to curate a combination of the options below. If you do not have any of the three types of materials to include, you are not eligible to apply to the AFS Grant for Short Films.

#### 1. If you've already shot the proposed film:

*Submit material from the film you're requesting funding for.*

- If you've already shot your film, or even some of it, reviewers will expect to see material from the film for which you are requesting funds.
- Ideally, you will be able to submit a polished scene to give reviewers a good sense of what your project will be like.
- Only have raw footage? Choose some select moments or a solid interview from your film to highlight the project's potential.

#### 2. If you haven't shot the proposed film but have other completed films that you've directed:

*Submit previous work directed by the applicant.*

- Include scenes from previous work that shares stylistic or thematic similarities with your current project to demonstrate continuity and growth in your filmmaking approach.
- If the proposed project is noticeably different from previous films, take some time to explain how your vision will carry over to this new material or what you're trying to do differently this time. This will help reviewers see where you're coming from and where you're going.

#### 3. If you are a first-time director who has not shot their proposed film:

*Submit work samples from other key members of the production team.*

- If you have never directed something yourself, submit several examples of work from other key members of your production team to help reviewers envision the final result. We recommend samples from your DP, producer, or writer.

- This is also helpful if you have only made 1–2 films and want to add more dimension to your sample.
- Make sure that you clearly state whose work each sample represents in the Required Video Sample description.

### What not to Include in your Required Video Sample

Please do not submit any of the following as your Required Video Sample, as they do not effectively demonstrate the director's or collaborator's ability to execute a film.

Submitting either of the following video samples may result in the project being deemed ineligible for review:

1. Pitch videos or crowdfunding videos
2. AI-assisted or AI-generated proof-of-concept videos for projects in which the final product will not be created in the same way

### REQUIRED VIDEO SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

*Give context to what you are showing and how it connects with the project for which you're applying for funding.*

- Indicate anything that is incomplete about the sample (e.g. unmixed sound levels, temporary music, temporary voiceovers, or uncleared music — whatever the issues may be).
- If the sample showcases another crew member's work instead of your own, let us know whose work it is and include a description of the project.

### B. OPTIONAL VIDEO SAMPLE (no time limit)

*You may submit more film work as an additional video sample in the field below.*

*NOTE: Reviewers are not required to view the Optional Video Sample in its entirety.*

### REQUIRED VIDEO SAMPLE TIPS

- Choose scenes and clips that highlight your (and/or your team's) filmmaking skills and that align with your project's style and themes. Do not randomly select the first 6 minutes of your film unless that is your strongest work.
- Avoid sending trailers as your Required Video Sample. Trailers cannot convey pacing, character development, or your directorial style in the way that a continuous scene can.
- Some of the most successful video samples have included a few strategically selected scenes as the Required Video Sample and either a rough or fine cut of a film in its entirety as their Optional Video Sample. NOTE: Reviewers are not required to watch optional samples in their entirety.



## Technical Guidelines

The Optional Video Sample is submitted as a link in the online application form. Below are some guidelines for the Optional Video Sample:

- This sample does not have a time limit.
- If your additional video sample includes multiple samples, please be sure they are edited in one timeline, as you may only include one link.
- Downloadable links are recommended for additional work samples where possible.
- We do not accept links that require a username to log in.
- Make sure that your link remains active until September 2025. AFS will not reach out to repair inactive links.
- You may password protect the film and include the password below. Make sure the password stays the same until September 2025. AFS will not reach out for a new password.

## Recommendations of What to Include in your Optional Video Sample

Your Optional Video Sample should also support your project's goals. Below is an outline of what you can include, listed in AFS's order of preference, starting with the highest priority.

- 1. If you have shot the proposed film and have a cut of it:**  
Submit a rough, fine, or completed cut of the film that you're requesting funding for.
- 2. If you haven't shot your film but have other completed films that you've directed:**  
Submit a rough, fine, or completed cut of previous work directed by the applicant.
- 3. If you are a first-time director who has not shot their proposed film:**  
Submit previous work from other key members of the production team not already in the Required Video Sample and that will support your application.
- 4. If you have only made 1-2 films and have not shot the proposed film:**  
Consider submitting selected clips of #2 and #3 above that are not already in the Required Video Sample and that will support your application.
- 5. Any other footage that you feel will support the materials provided in the application and that could supplement the Required Video Sample.**

## OPTIONAL VIDEO SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

*Give context to what you are showing and how it connects with the project for which you're applying for funding.*

- Indicate anything that is incomplete about the sample (e.g. unmixed sound levels, temporary music, temporary voiceovers, or uncleared music — whatever the issues may be).
- If the sample showcases another crew member's work instead of your own, let us know who on your crew it showcases.



## SECTION 7 - OPTIONAL ATTACHMENTS

The materials below are optional to submit. They must be uploaded to your online application as PDFs. Reviewers are not required to view your optional materials in their entirety. However, if your required materials capture their attention, they may refer to them to help make their decision.

**Individual PDF files cannot exceed 10MB.** Please use the following naming convention for each upload: **Project Name\_Last Name\_Attachment Name.pdf**

### Letters of Support (1-2 pages max per letter)

*Up to 2 letters of support are encouraged for first-time filmmakers but are not required.*

- Only recommended for first-time filmmakers.
- You may submit up to 2 letters of support. Each can be their own separate upload.
- Letters of support should be uploaded by the applicant and not sent separately.

### Additional Support Materials (3 pages max)

*Upload up to 5 pages of additional materials like (but not limited to) storyboards, news articles, or other production materials.*

- You may submit reviews, articles, storyboards, or images that help put your project in a favorable light.
- All materials must be uploaded to the online application as a single PDF.
- The next module allows you to submit pitch decks or lookbooks, but if you do not have one and you have not shot your film yet, we encourage you to use some or all of these pages to visually communicate the look and feel of your film.
- Documents that exceed the page length will not be looked at in their entirety.

**Pitch Deck or Lookbook (10 pages max)**

*This is a new addition this year! Upload either a pitch deck or a lookbook that is up to 10 pages in length. The uploaded document may be up to 20MB in size.*

- If you have not shot your film yet, we highly encourage you to upload either a lookbook or a pitch deck so that reviewers get a better idea of what you hope to bring to the screen. See our [glossary](#) for how we define pitch decks and lookbooks.
- If you are submitting a pitch deck, it should have a lookbook or a previsualization component that communicates the look and feel of your project.
- Documents that exceed the page length will not be looked at in their entirety.

**Script (no page limit)**

*Scripts are not required, but we encourage you to upload a draft if A) one already exists and B) the proposed film has not been shot and submitted to us. There is no page limit. If your film has already been shot and you've submitted a cut, do not submit a script.*

- For narrative projects, submitting a script in addition to the treatment is optional. This is not a screenplay competition, and early drafts are fine. You can indicate any rewrites you plan to do in your "Production Status and Plan" essay or "Project Timeline" attachment.

**NOTE: Reviewers are not required to read scripts in their entirety.**







2024 AFS Grant recipient  
**THE FATAL EGG**  
Dir. by Joel Mendez-Zarate

## IX. SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

You'll receive a confirmation email from us once you submit your online application and supporting materials. If you do not receive a confirmation email within an hour after submitting, it is possible that we did not receive your application OR that your email preferences need to be adjusted. We advise first checking your spam folder. If it's not there, contact our team at [filmmakersupport@austinfilm.org](mailto:filmmakersupport@austinfilm.org).

### QUESTIONS?

Contact [filmmakersupport@austinfilm.org](mailto:filmmakersupport@austinfilm.org)

Questions regarding the application will be answered during regular business hours, Monday–Friday, 10 AM–6 PM, via email at [filmmakersupport@austinfilm.org](mailto:filmmakersupport@austinfilm.org). We do not respond to phone calls. If you'd like to speak with us by phone, please send an email request with the best number to reach you and the times that you are available, and we will try to accommodate the call.

***As we get closer to the deadline, response times will be longer. We cannot guarantee that we will respond before the deadline. Please plan accordingly.***

***AFS Grant deadlines are firm, and we do not grant deadline waivers or extensions.***

Applicants will be notified about their status by mid-December. AFS Grant award announcements will be posted on our website in January. Applicants whose projects are not selected for a grant may request written feedback on their application by filling out the Feedback Request Form included in their declination letter.

For a list of previous recipients and other funding opportunities, visit our website at [austinfilm.org](http://austinfilm.org).

## GOOD LUCK!