

FILM INDEPENDENT FISCAL SPONSORSHIP

PLEASE READ THIS HANDBOOK

Updated December 1, 2025

Fiscal Sponsorship Program Staff

Daniel Cardone
Manager, Nonfiction Programs & Fiscal Sponsorship
dcardone@filmIndependent.org

Alana Waksman
Associate, Nonfiction Programs & Fiscal Sponsorship
awaksman@filmIndependent.org

Isaac Richter
Fiscal Sponsorship Finance Coordinator
irichter@filmIndependent.org

Main fiscal sponsorship email: fiscalsponsorship@filmIndependent.org

Film Independent EIN Number (aka Tax ID Number)

95-3943485

How do I manage my project?

All project management forms, documents for grantors, IRS related information and a link to the program handbook can be found on the [Project Management page](#). Bookmark it and save it. It is your best friend!

How can I update my donation page?

Please email any changes to your donation page to Isaac Richter at irichter@filmindependent.org. Please allow up to five business days for the updates to be made live.

How can my donors give to my sponsored project?

Film Independent offers a variety of ways for donors to contribute to your project: Online Donations, Check, Wire Transfers, ACH (Direct Deposit), Matching Gifts and Stocks/Shares.

In all cases, the fiscal sponsorship administrative fee is deducted at the time a grant or donation is processed and is reflected in your balance reports. THE FEE IS NON-REFUNDABLE.

In the event a donation must be returned to a donor, the full amount is returned to the donor. As stated above, the administrative fee is non-refundable and will be charged to the project.

Online Donations

Donating online is easy and convenient via your personalized project page on the Film Independent website.

If you haven't done so already, please submit your project's information via the [online form](#). You may send out the direct link to your donation page once it has been published on our site. Donors will follow the 'DONATE' button on your page and the instructions to give online. See an example of what your page will look like [here](#).

As a courtesy to our members, Film Independent absorbs the credit card transaction fees that occur with each online transaction, up to the amount of \$5,000 per donation. For any amount including and above \$5,000, we will charge an additional 3% processing fee.

If you have donors who wish to make a donation of \$5,000 or over, we recommend you advise them to do so via wire transfer, direct deposit (ACH), or check. These methods will not incur an additional processing fee.

Please note that credit card donations can take up to **ten business days** to be deposited into your account.

Check Donations

Checks must be made out to **Film Independent, Inc.** and include your **project title in the memo line** and sent to our office address:

Film Independent, Inc.
Attn: Fiscal Sponsorship
5670 Wilshire Blvd. 9th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90036

Please note that we cannot accept checks made out to you, the project director, your film or your business entity. For a donation to be tax deductible as allowed by law it must be made out to Film Independent, Inc.

Do not send checks via carriers requiring signatures. Film Independent staff work hybrid home/office hours, and we cannot guarantee there will be anyone to sign for the check if delivery is attempted.

We also cannot accept cash donations of any kind. If you receive a cash donation or a check mistakenly made out to you, please request a corrected check from your donor.

Please remember to allow time for mail and deposit. **Checks must be cleared by our bank before funds can be made available. This process may take up to ten business days.**

If you are expecting a donation via check, please let us know via the [Incoming Donation Form](#)

Wire Transfers & ACH (Direct Deposit)

Wire transfers and ACH direct deposit are available for donors as an alternative to using your online donation page.

Here is Film Independent's wire transfer and ACH direct deposit information:

City National Bank
Film Independent, Inc
400 N Roxbury Drive
Beverly Hills, CA, 90210

ACCT: 128090010
ROUTING: 122016066

Please be sure that your donor includes your project name on all electronic transfers. Wire transfers and ACH transfers to your account are generally available after **ten business days**.

If you are expecting a donation via wire or ACH, please let us know via the [Incoming Donation Form](#)

Matching Gifts

Many corporate employers offer matching gift programs to their employees, which allows the employer to match up to 100% of an employee's donation to a particular 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Some matching donation platforms such as Benevity allow projects to have their own listing. If you would like a listing, please reach out to us in advance to create one. Listings are not created automatically.

Please note that matching gifts generally take anywhere from 2-4 months to process. The delay is dependent on the company and the processing time of their donation platform. Film Independent cannot expedite this process.

If you are expecting a matching donation, please let us know via the [Incoming Donation Form](#)

Stock Donations

Film Independent can also accept transfers of stock as a donation. The process is straight forward, but we do need to be alerted in advance that the transfer will be taking place. Please fill out the [Incoming Stock/Shares Donation](#) form.

Donors should use the following information to donate to Film Independent.

Brokerage Firm Name: NFS
DTC #: 0226
F/B/O: FILM INDEPENDENT INC
A/C #: BHS-302601

As a rule, we sell the stock once we are notified of its arrival. We do not “play the stock market” for you to get the best value. All stocks are subject to commission fees and administrative fees incurred by the brokerages. We provide the Fair Market Value (FMV) to the donor which is based on the value on the day the stock was received by Film Independent and not the cash amount after the sale.

When can I access my donation?

To see the current balance of your account, please request a [balance report](#). Your balance report will show all available funds. Please see below under “How do I check my account balance?”

Wire transfers and ACH transfers to your account are generally available within **ten business days**.

For online donations made by credit card through your project page, please allow **up to ten business days** for the funds to be processed and available.

For checks, please remember to allow time for mail and deposit. **Checks must be cleared by our bank before funds can be made available. This process may take up to ten business days.**

How will I be notified when someone makes a donation?

Online

When someone donates via your online project portal, the donor will receive an automatically generated receipt emailed to them. Likewise, the listed contact on your account will receive an email notifying them that a donation has been made. If your donor claims to have not received this, ask them to check their junk mail folder.

All Other Methods

If you have received a donation from any method other than via your online project portal, you will generally receive an email on Monday with a balance report detailing all funds received. This email will include donation letters as applicable and when required to forward to the donor.

Can I accept in-kind donations for my project?

No. We are not able to accept in-kind donations on behalf of fiscally sponsored projects.

Where can I find my project ID?

Your project ID is emailed to you when your account is active. It is also included on any donation notification emails you receive. If you cannot locate this email, please contact us at fiscalsponsorship@filmIndependent.org to retrieve your number.

How do I check my account balance?

Fill out the [Balance Request Form](#) and we'll email you your report(s) directly. Your balance report will show your current available funds on the bottom line marked NET INCOME.

If you have received new donations since your last balance report from any other method other than via your online project page, our Finance team will email you a new balance report without you having to request it. See "All Other Methods" above.

All requests for balance reports must be submitted no later than 10:00 AM PT Friday to ensure they can be fulfilled prior to the deadline for disbursement requests the following

Tuesday at 10:00 AM PT. In the event of a federal holiday or holiday recognized by Film Independent, all deadlines will be adjusted accordingly with notification in advance.

All disbursement requests for funds must have a CURRENT balance report attached. Please plan accordingly to avoid delays.

Film Independent staff strive to keep account balances accurate. In the unlikely event of an accounting error, it may be necessary to revise your balance report. You will be notified if an error has been made on your account.

Please note that credit card and stock donations generally take up to ten business days to be deposited into your account. Checks must be cleared by the bank before funds can be made available. As such, balance reports may not reflect recent donations depending on the timing of your request.

How do I request a disbursement of funds?

To receive your disbursement via direct deposit or wire transfer, we will need to authorize your account first.

Once your account is online, you will be sent an ACH Authorization Form to complete via eSign. Fill out this form and return it *before* you request funds. The authorization clearance can take up to seven business days.

Please make sure the banking information is accurate and that the account can accept direct deposit or wire transactions (as applicable).

You will not be able to change this account information unless there are extenuating circumstances such as the close of a financial institution or a change of business entity. In the event you need to change banking information, you will need to request a new ACH Authorization Form.

IMPORTANT: The beneficiary's name and address on the ACH Authorization Form MUST match the beneficiary's name and address on your W9. This is the name that will be used for your 1099 at the end of the year.

If your account belongs to an LLC, the beneficiary's name must be the LLC name, not the name of the project representative.

All funds must be disbursed into a production or designated individual bank account. You cannot, under any circumstances, pay a vendor or debtor directly from your fiscal sponsorship account. Any attempt to do so will result in the suspension of your account.

Once your account is authorized, you may request a disbursement of funds anytime by filling out the [Disbursement Request form](#). There is no minimum or maximum amount you are allowed to request, provided the funds are in your account. We recommend not taking out more than you are likely to spend in a fiscal quarter.

Disbursements are made **WEEKLY** by ACH, generally posting to your account on Friday.

Fund disbursement requests must be submitted via the online form by **TUESDAY AT 10:00 AM PT** to be included in that week's ACH. ****Please plan accordingly so that your production cash flow is not compromised****

You will need to attach a current [balance report](#) to your disbursement request. You cannot request funds that are not yet shown on your balance report.

Any disbursement requests submitted AFTER the Tuesday deadline will be included in the FOLLOWING WEEK'S ACH.

In the event of a federal holiday or holiday recognized by Film Independent, all deadlines will be adjusted accordingly.

There may be some weeks throughout the year when disbursements are not possible. You will be notified no less than two weeks in advance if this occurs.

Rush Requests

RUSH REQUESTS are no longer available.

LIMITATION OF LIABILITY IN ADMINISTRATION

PLEASE NOTE THAT BY PARTICIPATING IN THE FISCAL SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM, IN NO EVENT SHALL FILM INDEPENDENT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ANY INDIRECT, INCIDENTAL, CONSEQUENTIAL, SPECIAL, PUNITIVE, OR EXEMPLARY DAMAGES, LOST PROFITS OR BUSINESS INTERRUPTION LOSSES IN CONNECTION WITH OR ARISING OUT OF ITS ADMINISTRATION OF THE FUNDS, EVEN IF FILM INDEPENDENT HAS BEEN INFORMED OF THE FOREGOING. NOR SHALL FILM INDEPENDENT BE LIABLE FOR ANY DELAY IN THE ADMINISTRATION THEREOF THAT IS ATTRIBUTABLE TO A "FORCE MAJEURE" EVENT, WHICH INCLUDES ANY EVENT OUTSIDE THE REASONABLE CONTROL OF FILM INDEPENDENT.

Annual Reporting

Project representatives are required to submit an **annual report** to Film Independent once a year in March. The project report is a way for us to check in with you about how your project is going and for you to update us on any changes that have happened over the previous calendar year. **Submitting a report is mandatory.**

Fill out the annual project report [here](#).

To remain in good standing annual reports must be submitted with the required information by the deadline. Projects failing to submit reports will be subject to a hold on funds and risk account closure if reporting requirements cannot be met.

Along with the report, you will be required to upload a **cost report** accounting for all funds that have been distributed to you over the previous calendar year and how they have been allocated – so stay on top of your bookkeeping! Though we do not require proof of receipt or invoices, we do reserve the right to request them, so it's good practice to keep track of them as you go. A template for the cost report is available both on the annual report submission page on our website and [here](#).

Film Independent will email you a **1099** at the beginning of each year via email. For questions about your 1099, please email fiscalsponsorship@filmindependent.org

We will send you an email reminder well in advance of the report deadline letting you know when the annual report is due and how to submit it online.

Membership

One of the requirements of participation in the fiscal sponsorship program is that we have an active Film Independent Membership associated with your project until you chose to close your account.

If your membership expires and is not renewed, your fiscal sponsorship account will be suspended until the membership is reactivated.

Is there standard language I should use when discussing the fiscal sponsor relationship?

Yes! Please use the following text when talking about your fiscal sponsorship relationship with potential funders and donors, on your website and any other marketing and fundraising materials.

[PROJECT NAME] is a fiscally sponsored project of Film Independent, a non-profit independent media arts organization. Film Independent will receive grants for the charitable purposes of [PROJECT NAME], provide oversight to ensure that grant funds are used in accordance with grant agreements, and provide reports as required by the grantor. Contributions for the charitable purposes of [PROJECT NAME] must be made payable to Film Independent and are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

How should Film Independent be listed in the credits of my project (if applicable)?

Whether or not funds are actually received and/or disbursed by Film Independent, projects must acknowledge Film Independent's role in the project by including the following credit.

“Fiscal Sponsorship Provided by
FiLM iNDEPENDENT”

Acknowledgment must include the Film Independent logo, which can be downloaded from the [project management page](#).

How do I apply for a grant?

Every grantor has different eligibility requirements and guidelines, so be sure to look them over to see if your project is a fit for their organization. One important question to note is whether they require a fiscal sponsor. If so, please contact our office to let us know you'll be applying so we can work together to get all the necessary organizational materials for your application. Many of the requested documents can be found on the [Project Management page](#), but others may have to be created at the grantor's request.

We request that you give us two weeks to a month's notice prior to submitting your grant.

Can I fund my project with a combination of donations and equity?

Yes! Many projects complete their funding with a combination of donations and equity investment. We don't believe it is incompatible for a project to have both an overriding charitable purpose in line with Film Independent's mission, and an interest in pursuing a return on investment for the filmmaker and possible third parties.

Email fiscalsponsorship@filmIndependent.org for a more detailed breakdown of how your fiscally sponsored project should work with equity investment.

How does crowdfunding work with fiscal sponsorship?

Film Independent works with two crowdfunding campaign platforms: Kickstarter and Seed&Spark. We require a consultation *prior* to a campaign being launched and ask that you contact us in the pre-planning stage, at least one month prior to your preferred campaign launch date. We cannot sponsor a crowd-funding campaign retroactively.

Please email fiscalsponsorship@filmIndependent.org to set up a crowdfunding consultation

In the initial consultation, we will discuss how crowdfunding works with fiscal sponsorship, how to set an achievable goal, your timeline and launch date, which platform makes the most sense for project and brainstorm ideas for getting the most out of your crowdfunding campaign.

How do I close my fiscal sponsorship account?

If you are no longer fundraising for your project, please fill out the [Project Closure Form](#). Once we receive your form, we will issue you a letter stating that the relationship ended and all financial obligations and report requirements to Film Independent have been met.