

**FILM
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SPiRiT
AWARDS**

**2026 Rules & Regulations
Television Submissions**

These are the official rules and regulations for the 2026 Film Independent Spirit Awards, Television Submissions. Please read the rules and regulations in their entirety prior to filling out the submission form.

Final interpretation of all rules and regulations and eligibility of submissions shall be made by the Spirit Awards Nominating Committees and Film Independent. You may contact the Nominations Office for clarifications and with questions via email:

NOMINATIONS STAFF

Drea Clark, Nominations Producer, dclark@filmindependent.org
Sonali Sundararaj, TV Nominations Manager, ssundararaj@filmindependent.org
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IMPORTANT DATES & FEES

Submissions open (Tuesday, August 19, 2025)

TV Regular Deadline (Tuesday, September 2, 2025):

\$525.00 – Film Independent Member fee | \$575.00 – non Member fee

TV Final Deadline (Tuesday, September 16, 2025):

\$625.00 – Film Independent Member fee | \$675.00 – non Member fee

**TV Arts Circle, Filmmaker Pro and Secret Member Extended Deadline
(Friday, Sept 19, 2025):**

\$625.00 – Arts Circle, Filmmaker Pro and Secret Member fee

Nominations Announced (Week of December 1, 2025)

2026 Film Independent Spirit Awards (Sunday, February 15, 2026)

**+\$100 for each performer category submitted
for Best Lead, Best Supporting and/or Best Breakthrough Performance in a New Scripted Series**

All series submitted for Best New Scripted Series are automatically considered for Best Ensemble Cast

Beginning August 19, you are invited to upload your screener to our submission partner Vision Media before submission form is completed; you **must** upload screener within 48 hours of form submission for title to be in consideration. Contact Sonali Sundararaj (ssundararaj@filmindependent.org) for screener upload deadline extension. Approved titles must be uploaded by the provided extension date for title to be in consideration.

RULES FOR ELIGIBILITY

1. The 2026 Film Independent Spirit Awards will recognize new series airing during eligibility period of October 1, 2024 - September 30, 2025. If a series submitted for the 2025 Film Independent Spirit Awards but was not nominated, and qualifies in the new eligibility period, it may re-submit for consideration.
2. A new series is defined as having all or part of its first season broadcast within the eligibility period of October 1, 2024 - September 30, 2025. Any series that previously aired, was discontinued, and is now being revived is ineligible.

An anthology series is only eligible in its first season. All genres are eligible.

3. Episodes must be at least 18 minutes in length and a minimum of two (2) episodes must have been broadcast, transmitted or available via a commercial streaming platform within the eligibility window. Series must be available via network, basic cable, pay cable, pay television, pay-per-view, interactive cable, broadband, or digital distribution through streaming platforms.
4. Only series eligible to submit in the category of Best New Scripted Series are eligible to submit for Best Lead Performance, Best Supporting Performance, and/or Best Breakthrough Performance.

All series submitted for Best New Scripted Series are automatically considered for Best Ensemble Cast. One (1) series will be awarded Best Ensemble Cast at the discretion of the Nominating Committee.

5. International series may only be eligible if:
 - a. The series airs on a U.S. platform with the purpose to be shown to U.S. audiences within the eligibility window, AND
 - b. The series is a co-production between U.S. and International partners, creatively and financially, preceding the start of production.

Eligibility for all awards shall first be determined by credits as they **appear on the screen**. If a series is determined ineligible for any reason or submitted in the wrong category, the Spirit Awards Nominations Staff will contact the submitter. Award is given to individuals credited as Creator, Executive Producer and Co-Executive Producer on at least 50% of the episodes in the first season of the series.

For Best Ensemble Cast, eligible performers include:

- a. Individuals with a "Starring" credit on one or more eligible episode(s), AND
- b. Individuals with a "Guest Starring" credit on 50% or more of eligible episodes

Any performer recognized as part of the awarded Best Ensemble Cast will no longer be eligible to be nominated in the individual performance categories.

CATEGORY INFORMATION

All final nominations and categories are at the sole discretion of the Spirit Awards Nominating Committees and Film Independent.

BEST NEW SCRIPTED SERIES (including continuing, limited, anthology series)

BEST NEW NON-SCRIPTED OR DOCUMENTARY SERIES

BEST LEAD PERFORMANCE IN A NEW SCRIPTED SERIES

Only performers from series submitted for Best New Scripted Series may submit for Best Lead Performance.

BEST SUPPORTING PERFORMANCE IN A NEW SCRIPTED SERIES

Only performers from series submitted for Best New Scripted Series may submit for Best Supporting Performance.

BEST BREAKTHROUGH PERFORMANCE IN A NEW SCRIPTED SERIES

Only performers from series submitted for Best New Scripted Series may submit for Best Breakthrough Performance.

BEST ENSEMBLE CAST IN A NEW SCRIPTED SERIES

All series submitted for Best New Scripted Series are automatically considered for Best Ensemble Cast. One (1) series will be awarded Best Ensemble Cast at the discretion of the Nominating Committee.

NOMINATING GUIDELINES

The Television categories at the Film Independent Spirit Awards will celebrate independent creative visual storytellers who are working in the television space and continuing to create bold, innovative and inclusive content. Through the lens of Film Independent's mission, we will recognize *new* series and celebrate original voices and content that is expanding the boundaries of television.

The Spirit Awards seeks to celebrate the year's highest achievements and culturally resonant new series. The Spirit Awards Nominating Committees apply the following guidelines in making their selections.

- Uniqueness of vision, innovation
- Original, provocative subject matter
- Diversity & inclusion, on and off camera, and also in the narrative and themes of the series

NOMINEE SCREENING PROGRAM

Spirit Award-nominated titles will be required to participate in the Nominee Screener program for a \$4,200 fee, which provides voters with digital screener access to watch nominees in our secure digital screening room, powered by Vision Media. For additional information on the Nominee Screener program, please email us at: membership@filmIndependent.org.

*PLEASE NOTE: ALL TITLES IN THE NOMINEE SCREENER PROGRAM WILL BE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE A COPY OF THE NOMINATED FILM OR TELEVISION EPISODE THAT INCLUDES CLOSED CAPTIONS. (Closed Caption File Spec: Hour Zero Start, WebVTT Format)

REQUIRED MATERIALS

The 2026 Spirit Awards have a submission form site (submittable.com) and a screener site (submissions.visionmedia.com).

Materials Checklist

In addition to contact information, and production details, the submission form site will require:

- Representative production stills from the film (preferred formats: JPEG, TIFF, PNG)
- A full, complete and official list of credits
- Series synopsis (100 words or less) / Episode synopsis (100 words or less)

One representative episode from the submitted series will need to be uploaded in its entirety to our screener website, Vision Media. Third party links will **NOT** be accepted. If you are submitting the same episode for consideration in both Best New Scripted Series and any performance categories, you only need to upload screener once.

You may upload your screener before completing your submission form, provided the titles are identically listed in both submission and upload (SERIES TITLE_Episode Name). Vision Media portal will be open and available for uploads as of August 19.

To upload screener, please login with this email/password, NOT personal Vision Media login:

URL: submissions.visionmedia.com

Email: submissions

Password: SAScreener2026

Tech Specs for Screener:

- Container: MP4
- Video Type: H.264
- Size/Ratio: 1920x1080 (16:9), 1280x720 (16:9) 1280 x 960 (4:3)
- Video Bitrate: 3136kbps (low motion) or 5928kbps (high motion e.g. sport)
- Key Frame Interval: minimum every 6 seconds
- Audio Type: AAC
- Audio Sample Frequency: 44.1kHz
- Audio Bite Rate: 192kbps

Screeners for submissions must be uploaded within 48 hours of submission form completion for title to be in consideration. Please contact Sonali Sundararaj (ssundararaj@filmindpendent.org) to request extension of screener upload deadline.

PAYMENT

You can pay via credit card per individual submissions on the Submittable submission form platform. If you have multiple submissions that you'd prefer to pay in bulk via ACH, please select "I Am Submitting Multiple" in the Payment section of Submittable.

If you select "I Am Submitting Multiple", please email sawards@filmindependent.org by Sept 16 and send us the following information so we can create an accurate invoice:

- total list of titles being submitted
- number of performer categories being submitted
- number additional screener uploads beyond the one (1) required consideration episode
- name/address and any PO information to be included on invoice

Please note: the invoice you receive from Film Independent will need to be paid out no later than October 20, 2025 for your titles to remain in consideration. ACH/wire payments MUST include the Film Independent invoice number.

Member fees: (TV Regular Deadline: \$525 by Sept 2/TV Final Deadline: \$625 by Sept 16)

Non-member fees: (TV Regular Deadline: \$625 by Sept 2/TV Final Deadline: \$675 by Sept 16)

Extended Arts Circle, Filmmaker Pro and Secret Member Deadline: (Extended Deadline: \$625 by Sept 19)

+ \$100 for each performer in a performance category

for Best Lead Performance, Best Supporting Performance and/or Best Breakthrough Performance in a New Scripted Series (if submitting same performer in multiple categories, fee is \$100 per category)

Submitting Additional Episodes (\$100 per additional episode)

Scripted TV series are expected to submit one representative episode for the category of Best New Scripted series. While it is our preference that every series submits only one representative episode, series that are also submitting performers for the Best Male Performance and Best Female Performance categories may, **for an additional fee**, submit additional episodes that the submitter feels are a better showcase for a performer than the episode submitted for New Scripted Series.

For regular (non-anthology) TV series, for the category of Best Ensemble Cast, the representative episode that was submitted for Best New Scripted series will automatically be considered for the category of Best Ensemble Cast. For Anthology series only, we are accepting one additional episode to be submitted for the category of Best Ensemble Cast, for an additional fee.

Our preference is that the total for all episodes does not exceed 3 submitted episodes per TV series. If you have a case you'd like to make for an exception, please contact Sonali Sundararaj (ssundararaj@filmindependent.org).

FOLLOWING NOMINATIONS

Film Independent Members are the official the voting body that determines the winners for the Spirit Awards. To join Film Independent at any level of support, visit www.filmindependent.org/join

Should you receive a nomination for the 2026 Film Independent Spirit Awards, the primary contact for the series is responsible for supplying all required materials (including nominee and representative contact information, promo trailer, clips, title cards and soundtrack) to Spirit Awards Production NO LATER than January 2, 2026. A materials request will be sent to all Nominee primary contacts by December 4, 2025 once Nominations are announced.

Up to five Spirit Award trophies will be provided per category to winning teams; additional trophies will be available for purchase for winning teams larger than five. All nominated titles will be required to take part in the Nominee Screener Program; more information on that will be sent with nominee notifications.