



# AFMX 2026 Festival Submission Guidelines

The Albuquerque Film & Music Experience is presented by the AFME Foundation, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.



ALBUQUERQUE



GARY SHAW - 2025



Photo by Jerry Jaz

## About the Albuquerque Film & Music Experience

The Albuquerque Film & Music Experience (AFMX) is more than just a festival—it's a movement! Held every September in Albuquerque, New Mexico, AFMX is where filmmakers, musicians, students, and creatives come together to connect, create, and inspire. As we approach our 14th year, we are committed to not only showcasing incredible art, but also to advancing careers by providing tangible, professional opportunities.

## Our Mission

Our mission is to create a dynamic fusion of film, music, and education. Where groundbreaking films, live performances, and career development panels unite to create an unforgettable cultural experience, sparking connections and inspiring creativity for generations.

## Why Albuquerque?

Albuquerque is a vibrant and diverse city with a thriving film, television, music, and arts scene.

It's no wonder that:

- TheTravel.com named Albuquerque one of the top ten travel experiences in the world.
- MovieMaker Magazine consistently ranks Albuquerque among the *'Top 10 Cities to Be a Movie Maker.'*
- Forbes lists Albuquerque as one of "Hollywood's Favorite Cities."



## AFMX is Making a Name for Itself

- Moviemaker Magazine ranks AFMX as one of the top 50 festivals worth the entry fee.
- FilmFreeway names AFMX one of the top 100 best-rated festivals in the world.

## What We Offer:

We're passionate about storytelling and bringing together film and music to create a unique and unforgettable experience. What we offer:

- **Guaranteed Distribution Offer:** AFMX has secured an exclusive agreement with Ben Yennie of Disrupt Entertainment to provide a major value-add. Every official feature narrative selection receives a guaranteed distribution offer. This valuable commitment immediately opens a professional distribution door for your film.
- **Groundbreaking Films:** A showcase of incredible films from around the world.
- **Live Performances:** Experience the energy of live music performances.
- **Career Development:** Learn from industry experts and connect with other creatives through our panels and events.
- **Contests:** Opportunities to show off your talents in screenwriting, live-readings, songwriting, and pitch panel contests.



Photo by Dylan Chieffalo



## Join the Movement!

Be a part of the AFMX experience and help us establish Albuquerque as a global center of artistic innovation and collaboration.

### Past Attendees and Alumni of the Film Festival Include:

Al Goto, Ali MacGraw, Angelique Midthunder, Bryan Cranston, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Chris Eyre, Chris Gero, Chris Schueler, Christopher Lockhart, Dave Grusin, Dee Wallace, Dez Baa, Eric Clapton, Frances Lee McCain, Giancarlo Esposito, Greg Phillinganes, Joaquim de Almeida, Jono Manson, Joshua Friedman, Joshua Michael Stern, Levi Platero, Luis Bordonada, Marisa Tomei, Mark Margolis, Michael Keaton, Neil Giraldo, Patrick Fabian, Rhea Seehorn, Robert Mason, Robert Redford, Samuel L. Jackson, Sharon Lawrence, Sibylle Redford, Snuffy Walden, Steve Ferrone, Steven Michael Quezada, Stevie Salas, Stewart Lyons, Sydney Freeland, Sylvia Caminer, T Bone Burnett, Thomas Dolby, Tracey Reiner, W Earl Brown, Wes Studi.



*Photo by Mark Soo Hoo*



*Photo by Jerry Jaz*



*Photo by Jerry Jaz*

## Awards

AFMX offers \$10,000 worth of awards and prizes in unique Native American pottery awards, distribution packages, consultation meetings and software packages.

Available awards are as follows:

Robert & Sibylle Redford Award for Creative Achievement  
AFMX Music Award  
Best Narrative Feature  
Best Narrative Short  
Best Documentary Feature  
Best Documentary Short  
Best BIPOC Film - Narrative or Short  
Best Student Film - Narrative or Short  
Best Animated Film - Narrative or Short  
Best Actor  
Best Actress  
Best Cast Ensemble  
Best Music Video  
Best Director - Narrative Feature  
Best Director - Documentary Feature  
Best Director - Narrative Short  
Best Director - Documentary Short  
Best New Mexico Film - Narrative or Short

All decisions regarding award winners are considered final and incontestable.



*Photo by Brady Hensley*

## Festival Rules & Terms

By submitting your project to Albuquerque Film + Music Experience, submitter agrees to adhere and implies unconditional acceptance to the Festival Rules and Terms which is required to participate in the festival.

## AFMX's Use of Your Film

We might archive your film. We might keep a copy of your film for our records, but we will only use it for historical and research purposes.

We will not screen it publicly without your permission. We won't show your film to the public without asking you first.

## Clearances

You have all the necessary clearances for public exhibition. This means you have all the required permissions and licenses to show your film publicly.

## Film Rights & Permissions

It is important that your film is legally sound before you submit it to AFMX.

### Here's what you need to know:

- Your film must be entirely your own creation. This means you have permission to use everything in your film. This includes the music, images, story, and any other content. You also have releases from anyone appearing in the film.
- You've paid any required fees. If you used any copyrighted material (like music or images), you've already paid the copyright holders.
- Your film does not break any laws. It does not infringe on anyone's rights, including copyright, privacy, and defamation laws.
- There are no legal issues with your film. This means there are no lawsuits or disputes about it.
- Your film is not currently available on any streaming service (like Netflix or Hulu), broadcast channel, or video-on-demand platform.

**Important note:** We do not check these rights ourselves, so it is up to you to make sure everything is legally sound before you submit.





Photo by Julian Gowdy

## Film Acceptance

- **No Special Obligations:** Just because AFMX chooses my film, it does not mean they have to do anything else for me, like represent me or act in my best interests.
- **No Endorsement:** AFMX choosing my film does not mean they agree with everything in it or endorse any of the views expressed in the film.
- **Protecting AFMX:** I agree to protect AFMX and everyone involved with the festival from any legal trouble that might come up because of my film or the festival showing it. This means I will be responsible for any losses, expenses (like lawyer fees), or problems caused if I break any of the promises I have made in this agreement.
- **No Confidential Relationship:** We both agree that this does not create any special relationship where we have to keep secrets or where the festival has to act in my best interests.

## Promotional Use

I give AFMX permission to:

- Use clips, pictures, and info from my film to promote the festival.
- Promote my film and the filmmakers, including using our names and pictures.
- Share contact info for the director and producer(s) with film industry organizations if they choose to.
- We want to make sure that all films submitted to AFMX are legally sound, so please make sure you meet these requirements before submitting.



*Photo by Emily Rhodus*

## Marketing Promotional Use and Rights

**Promotional Use:** AFMX can use images from your film for marketing.

**Promotional Materials:** You agree to let us use your name, stills from your film, and a short clip or trailer for promotional purposes. Please provide at least one high-quality image of your film upon request.

**Approval for Other Use:** We will ask for your permission before using your film for anything beyond our internal screening process and general festival promotion (like press screenings).

We suggest that you include the following information with your submission so that we may better promote your film:

**Digital Press Kit:** Please include a digital press kit with your submission:

1. Primary contact for the film (name, email, and phone).
2. Production stills (960x380px, up to 2 stills).
3. Poster link (960x380px).
4. Social Media Handles: We highly recommend submitters provide social media handles so we may better promote your film or submission status.



## Film Categories

**AFMX accepts films in the following categories:**

- Narrative, Documentary, Student, Animation, BIPOC, and New Mexico, both feature and short films, Music Videos.
- Student entries must provide a photocopy of a current and valid student ID or a letter from his/her school verifying enrollment.

## Screening Process

- **Screening Team:** Our team is composed of professional producers, directors, screenwriters, actors and festival programmers. We also encourage film and music students to join our screening as part of their internship or classroom assignment.
- **Easy Access:** Please upload your film directly to FilmFreeway so our entire screening committee can easily access it.
- **Our selection process is based on the following criteria:** story, screenwriting, cinematography, sound, production value, music, performance, editing, structure and pacing.

## Travel Support

While AFMX does not provide travel stipends to help with travel costs, we do offer discount codes for lodging to help make your trip to Albuquerque more affordable. More information about venues and locations can be found on our website, [www.afmxnm.com](http://www.afmxnm.com).

Student entries must provide a photocopy of a current and valid student ID or a letter from his/her school verifying enrollment.



## Important Notes

- **Commitment to Screening:** Once we have accepted your film and you have sent us a digital copy, you cannot withdraw it from the festival program as it will be already programmed.
- **Unexpected Changes:** We might need to change how screenings or events happen due to unforeseen circumstances (like public health concerns or government regulations). Submission fees cannot be refunded in these cases.
- **Scheduling:** Screenings are scheduled at AFMX's discretion. We may make changes to the schedule at any time.
- **Representing Your Film:** We encourage all filmmakers to attend the festival and represent their films. We invite distribution companies to the festival and present networking events to maximize filmmaker attendance.
- **Troubleshooting:** If you have any problems with your submission or need to re-submit, please contact us at [film@afmxnm.com](mailto:film@afmxnm.com)

## Returning Your Materials

- **You are responsible for shipping costs:** You will need to pay to ship your film to us, whether it is coming from inside the US or another country.
- **Want your stuff back?** If you want us to return your film after the festival, include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your submission.
- **Physical copies:** If you send us a physical copy (like a thumb drive or hard drive), we will not return it unless you specifically ask us to and include a prepaid, self-addressed envelope or package with your submission.





## Submission Guidelines 2026

- **Production Date:** Your film must have been completed between September 2024 and May 2026.
- **Submission Deadline:** April 15, 2026 - Make sure to submit your film by this date! If it is late, you might need to pay a late fee, or your film might not be considered.
- **Acceptance Notification:** We will let you know if your film has been selected by Monday, May 31, 2026.
- **Submission Fees:** Each film you submit has a separate entry fee. You can pay these fees securely through FilmFreeway.
- **No Refunds:** All submission fees are non-refundable.
- **Final Version/"Picture Locked" Only:** Submit the final version of your film. We will not accept any updates or changes after you've submitted.
- **Subtitles:** If your film has dialogue in a language other than English, please include English subtitles. When possible, provide closed captions for accessibility accommodations.
- **Re-Submitting Your Film:** You can re-submit a film if you have made significant changes. Include a short letter explaining the updates.
- **Premiere Status:** We welcome premieres of narrative and documentary features. The only requirement is that your film can't be currently available on any streaming service (like Netflix or Hulu), broadcast channel, or video-on-demand platform.
- **Properly name all of your submission file documents with your film title.**

For example, poster files, trailers, films, etc.

### Examples:

FilmName\_Poster\_AFMX.jpg  
FilmNamePosterAFMX.jpg  
FilmName\_TrailerAFMX.mp4  
FilmeNameTrailerAFMX.mp4



## Submission Format

- Must submit through FilmFreeway to be eligible for award consideration.
- Provide a downloadable link to your film (from FilmFreeway, Vimeo, Dropbox, or WeTransfer). **Include any passwords** that are required to access the film.
- Name your film file something recognizable. Your film name should be included in the file. Your file should **not** say something like final\_cut\_v6.mp4.

**You can use the following naming convention or something as easily recognizable for your film:**

FilmName\_AFMXSubmission.mp4  
FilmnameAFMXSubmission.mp4

- File size is 20GB max
- Video: .mp4 container, H.264 codec, 1080p resolution
- Variable bit rate export 8-10 Mbps minimum suggested
- Audio: AAC, 2.0 Stereo, 320kbps suggested

We **do not** accept ProRes files.

Film Screenings are in .mp4 format only. We are open to screen in DCP format in the future.

**Projection:** We aim to provide the best quality projection possible, but we are not responsible for any technical issues with the projection.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact [film@afmxnm.com](mailto:film@afmxnm.com)

## Festival Dates

September 9-13, 2026.