FILM INDEPENDENT

President Position Profile



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For four decades, Film Independent has been the preeminent nonprofit empowering filmmakers to get their projects made and seen. With a mission to champion creative independence in visual storytelling in all its forms, the organization supports a global community of artists and audiences who embody diversity, innovation, curiosity and uniqueness of vision.

Film Independent offers artist development programs, grants and labs; it also produces the Independent Spirit Awards to celebrate filmmaking excellence. Project Involve, its signature mentorship program, fosters the careers of talented filmmakers from underrepresented communities. Weekly education events and workshops equip filmmakers of all ages and experience levels with tools and resources. The Global Media Makers program provides cultural exchanges and career-building opportunities for film professionals around the world. And the year-round screening series Film Independent Presents offers a robust program of unique cinematic experiences, including screenings, conversations, and the Live Reads series.

>>> 8,280 members

>>> 67 countries

>>> 49 states + Washington D.C.

>>> 40% live outside of California

>>>>> The Role of President is a compelling opportunity for an artistically attuned, strategically minded and media savvy leader to helm a preeminent organization at a pivotal moment in its 40-year history.

Film Independent seeks a President who has the strategic vision and history of accomplishment to lead the organization towards continued improvement, sustainable growth and programmatic excellence, while remaining true to its mission to support artists, amplify underrepresented voices and empower those who shape cultural narratives.

The President is an ardent champion of Film Independent's mission and a tireless advocate for the values and the spirit of the filmmaking community the organization serves. With a belief in the power of storytelling to enrich our collective understanding of the world and of one another, the President will elevate the visibility of its brand, building and strengthening Film Independent's reputation, relationships and engagements. The ideal candidate will be a gifted fundraiser, have strong financial acumen, knowledge of media business models and a discerning eye to ensure Film Independent's continued sustainability and relevance.

By building on past success while navigating a changing media landscape—from shifting distribution models to emerging technologies to the globalization of media and ongoing equity challenges—the next President will ensure Film Independent remains an essential force within the global community of storytellers.

This is a compelling opportunity for an artistically attuned, strategically minded and media savvy leader to helm a preeminent organization at a pivotal moment in its 40-year history. Film Independent benefits from the stability of having had only three leaders in four decades, the support of a committed and resourceful 29-member Board of Directors and the talent of a seasoned, passionate staff of 43 (including 11 senior leadership team members). The President must lead with a personable and inclusive management style, improving team performance through inspiration, collaboration and accountability in service to the community of storytellers, supporters, industry advocates and film lovers.





Key Responsibilities

Lead the strategy and vision

- Develop a comprehensive strategic plan that serves as a roadmap for the organization, creating shared alignment around a vision to serve the needs of storytellers.
- Define Film Independent's mission within the industry and maintain relevance amidst rapid change, while preserving its legacy as an organization committed to access, diversity, excellence and innovation.
- Maximize strategic opportunities around all owned IP (e.g. its Live Reads series) in the current landscape.

- Translate mission and aspiration into specific strategies and measurable outcomes.
- Strengthen decision-making practices that sustain organizational change while continuing to deepen efforts on equity, transparency and accountability.
- Embed strategy as a continuous process, engendering commitment and alignment to clear goals.

Elevate the Film Independent Spirit Awards

- Oversee the successful production of the Spirit Awards, maintaining its standard of excellence as the leading awards event celebrating independent storytelling.
- Reassess its revenue potential via a streaming or broadcast partnership or identify other forms of revenue while pursuing excellence in the event, using it to foster engagement from all constituents, and controlling costs.
- Evolve the overall event experience through innovative production methods that enhance participation and attract a broader global audience.



Grow and diversify revenue

- Secure the funds needed to ensure the organization meets and exceeds the annual operating budget of over \$10M, allowing it to evolve and thrive in alignment with its strategic plan.
- Oversee implementation of a robust and diversified development plan that includes goals for philanthropic funding from individuals and foundations, corporate sponsorships and government funding.
- Cultivate effective relationships with the U.S. Department of State and other relevant federal agencies, with the goal of sustaining and expanding funding for the Global Media Makers program.
- Increase membership base and deepen donor engagement at all levels.
- Lead efforts to explore new revenue opportunities, such as partnerships with consumer-facing brands or content creators, while controlling costs and maintaining mission alignment.
- Refine key messaging strategies to create a more compelling case for support that directly motivates and inspires donor engagement.

Oversee financial and operational performance

- Optimize operational functions aligned with Film Independent's organizational values and strategic direction.
- Orive financial planning to balance annual budgets.
- Translate organizational priorities into multi-year budget scenarios to ensure the organization has the financial capacity to meet its strategic goals.
- Create a system to measure and evaluate objectives, key results, resources and priorities that fosters a culture of responsible stewardship and shared accountability for financial goals.
- Strengthen efforts for ethical innovation and operational experimentation with tools to boost productivity.

Engage the Board of Directors

- Work closely with the Board of Directors to build and maintain effective relationships; communicate and partner on matters of governance, financial oversight, strategy and fundraising.
- Support the recruitment of new board members, ensuring broad and inclusive representation both from within and outside the media business; support their role as advisors, philanthropists, fundraisers and ambassadors to harness their ideas, talents and resources.
- Present to the board timely updates on the organization's performance against adopted goals, strategies, objectives and tactics.

Enhance programmatic and educational initiatives

- Uphold Film Independent's commitment to cinematic excellence, ensuring that programmatic content aligns with its mission and values.
- Assess the impact, efficacy and sustainability of programmatic and educational initiatives; establish priorities and processes to scale and modify programs within budget, timeframes and capacity.
- Develop strategies to expand national and international programming, identifying regions where Film Independent's services have the greatest feasibility and potential to flourish.
- Expand efforts to provide new technology resources (e.g. rapidly developing AI tools) for filmmakers, balancing ethical practices and industry concerns with considerations regarding access and equity.





Expand strategic marketing, communications and brand ambassadorship

- Serve as a compelling spokesperson for Film Independent; demonstrate an unwavering commitment to its mission and constituents; tell the organization's story and draw on data to convey its impact and strengths in a way that inspires support from a broad range of audiences.
- Foster key allies in the creative community to help promote the brand and enhance programmatic excellence.
- Guide communications strategy, narrative strategy, executive communications and public relations in a manner that will strengthen its recognition and appeal nationally and internationally.
- Reinvigorate membership offerings and services through innovative marketing initiatives to drive membership growth and engagement.
- Respond to emergent events by developing timely and informed strategies that connect and advance Film Independent's priorities.

Build capacity and invest in people

- Build an organizational culture rooted in belonging, purpose and learning as a core strategy to impact team engagement, behavior and execution.
- Strengthen interdepartmental teamwork and communication with production and workflow processes that support problemsolving, information sharing and effectiveness.
- Manage a diverse workforce with cultural sensitivity, ensuring the internal systems and processes are consistent, equitable and inclusive.
- Foster team resilience with steady leadership through periods of uncertainty and change to ensure values alignment and promote collective well-being.
- Encourage continuous feedback and accountability practices while simultaneously reinforcing a culture of mutual respect, innovation and improvement.

Professional competencies and qualifications

- A proven record of superior accomplishment in leading a media entity, ideally with experience in the nonprofit sector such as independent film, public media or other cultural institution; experience with partnering and engaging with a board of directors to effectively govern an organization.
- A track record of translating strategic visions into a comprehensive, actionable plan.
- Past successes in building effective partnerships with major industry studios, distributors, production companies and/or other similar entities in the media industry.
- A gifted fundraiser with a verifiable record of philanthropic success and experience securing six-figure gifts.
- Deep understanding of the global film industry, with a broad network of professional and industry contacts.
- A proven track record in communityengaged leadership, with a focus on building coalitions and listening deeply and responding to the needs of varied constituencies.
- Ability to see the impact of industry shifts and current events on Film Independent's work to identify opportunities that advance organizational goals.





Candidate attributes

- Be a deep strategic and systems thinker.
- Have an adaptive mindset with the demonstrated ability to work with diverse internal and external partners and stakeholders.
- Have highly developed emotional and relational intelligence and communication skills to foster trust, collaboration, partnership and the ability to move teams forward through organizational change.
- Be a practitioner of innovative problemsolving who has the confidence and resourcefulness to mitigate and resolve conflict but also demonstrates a capacity to learn and self-evaluate.
- Have the capacity to make timely, and sometimes difficult, decisions and the ability to communicate decisions with clarity, care and accountability.
- Have a passion for film and the mission, vision and values of Film Independent, including an appreciation for Los Angeles's vibrant filmmaking community and the vital role independent storytelling plays in democracy.

Candidacy process

- Interested candidates are invited to submit their resumé and a detailed letter of interest that responds to the qualifications and attributes expressed in this search profile to President@filmindependent.org. All materials will be considered in full confidence.
- Applications (resumé and letter of interest) should be submitted as soon as possible. The Executive Search Committee will begin the internal review process on a rolling basis in October 2025 and will continue to accept applications until November 7, 2025.
- For nominations and inquiries, please email President@filmindependent.org. To protect the integrity of our structured candidacy process, please do not call, email or message Film Independent's office or solicit any member of the Board of Directors or staff.

Compensation

- This position offers a competitive salary and benefits package.
- The expected compensation range for this position is \$250,000−\$300,000.

Location

- Film Independent's offices are located in the vibrant Mid-Wilshire area of Los Angeles.
- Film Independent is currently a hybrid workplace with in-office and remote days, in accordance with best nonprofit practices and organizational needs.
- Responsibilities for the President may require an adjusted work schedule, with long work days, frequent travel and evening/weekend engagements as needed.

Film Independent is an equal opportunity employer and will not discriminate against any employee or applicant based on race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, age, gender, disability, pregnancy, sexual orientation or veteran status.

Upon request, Film Independent offers accommodations for candidates with disabilities during the application, interview and hiring process.



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