



FISCAL SPONSORSHIP

Frequently Asked Questions

What is fiscal sponsorship and why would I want it?

In the simplest terms, “fiscal sponsorship” is a way to receive tax-deductible contributions and grants by putting a “sponsored project” under the nonprofit umbrella of an existing organization (in this case, Milwaukee Film). It’s a simpler and less expensive way to receive donations for a sponsored project than creating a new nonprofit entity for each sponsored project. Projects must be consistent with Milwaukee Film’s mission and be noncommercial and nonprofit in nature. Applications are reviewed by a committee to determine if projects advance Milwaukee Film’s nonprofit mission.

So instead of attempting to secure nonprofit status for your project or production company (a lengthy, involved, and costly process), you may contract with a fiscal sponsor (i.e. Milwaukee Film). What a deal!

Are there eligibility requirements?

Yes, to qualify for our fiscal sponsorship program, you must:

- Be working on a noncommercial film, video, or other recorded visual media project consistent with Milwaukee Film’s mission.
- Be actively seeking donations in the form of grants from foundations, government agencies or corporations.
- Have an LLC or other legal entity established.
- Reside in one of the following Southeastern Wisconsin (M7) counties: Milwaukee, Waukesha, Kenosha, Racine, Ozaukee, Walworth, or Washington. If the project owner and/or primary contact do not reside in the M7 region but are still interested in fiscal sponsorship through Milwaukee Film, you will be required to explain why you are interested in the application. The Fiscal Sponsorship Committee will use this explanation to determine if the project advances Milwaukee Film’s mission, thus making it eligible for fiscal sponsorship.
- Be 18 years of age or older.
- Be a Milwaukee Film Member. If more than one person (i.e. project owner and primary contact) is applying with a project, both must be members.
- Student films are not eligible for this program, however the significant expansion or re-development of a project previously submitted for a school project (thesis film, etc) is eligible. Currently enrolled full- and part-time students in Film Production-related programs are ineligible to apply.
- Current year-round Milwaukee Film employees, Board members, and major funders or the immediate families of such individuals are ineligible to apply for fiscal sponsorship through Milwaukee Film.

What do you mean by “noncommercial”?

To take advantage of the benefits of Milwaukee Film’s fiscal sponsorship, the primary purpose of your project must be noncommercial (artistic, educational, or charitable in nature). The film must not be organized with individual investors who could receive a return on their investment or other financial benefit.



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On a case-by-case basis, Milwaukee Film may in its sole discretion accept projects which do not satisfy the above requirements because the project is organized as a for-profit entity, but which otherwise satisfy all eligibility criteria (such projects are referred to as “for-profit projects”). If Milwaukee Film accepts a for-profit project, the project owner understands that (i) Milwaukee Film will not accept investment funds, and (ii) the project owner is responsible for communicating with all donors, sponsors and other financial supporters of the for-profit project that funds provided to Milwaukee Film in support of the for-profit project are not tax deductible and that the participation of the for-profit project in Milwaukee Film’s fiscal sponsorship does not convey any tax benefit to the for-profit project or its financial supporters. Except as noted in this subparagraph, for-profit projects accepted by Milwaukee Film are subject to all of the requirements in the Fiscal Sponsorship Handbook.

How do I apply? How long does approval take?

To apply, submit an application using the [online form located here](#). Additional information can be found [here](#). Applications will be accepted on a year-round, rolling basis. You should expect to hear from Milwaukee Film regarding a decision about your project within four weeks of submission.

Is there an application fee? Are there any fees if/when my project is approved?

Milwaukee Film does not require an application fee to apply for our Fiscal Sponsorship program, however, we do require that applicants (project owner and/or primary contact) be Milwaukee Film Members. Memberships start at \$75 (Festival Fan). You can learn more about and sign up for our membership program here: <http://mkefilm.org/membership/>

If your project is approved for fiscal sponsorship through Milwaukee Film, there is a 7-10% administration fee applied to all funds routed through our fiscal sponsorship program. This fee covers the cost of managing these donations (including costs associated with bookkeeping, check distribution, fiscal reporting to funders, etc). The fee varies based on the reporting required by the entity from which the funds are received.

Lastly, Milwaukee Film requires owner(s) of approved projects to submit a Progress Report about their project two times a year. Late Progress Reports will incur a flat fee of \$50, which will be taken from the funds in your account or billed to you in full or part if your account balance is insufficient. Easy way to avoid *this* fee? Submit your Progress Reports on time!

Can I apply for Fiscal Sponsorship for more than one project I’m working on?

Yes, you can apply for Fiscal Sponsorship for more than one project you are working on. Each project will require a separate application and approval.



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If my project is fiscally sponsored through Milwaukee Film, can I still apply for the Brico Forward Fund?

Yes, projects that are fiscally sponsored through Milwaukee Film are still eligible for the Brico Forward Fund. The Brico Forward Fund application is very similar to the Fiscal Sponsorship application, making it easy for you to apply for both.

Does Milwaukee Film write and submit grant applications on my behalf?

In most cases, the project team is responsible for writing AND submitting their own grant applications. If a funder requires that your fiscal sponsor submit your application, please contact us. Milwaukee Film will not write grant applications, but we can provide feedback on your application materials. We require at least 2 weeks to review materials (and up to 4 weeks during the busier times of the year) so you'll need to plan well in advance of your deadline.

Can I have more than one fiscal sponsor?

Yes, projects sponsored through Milwaukee Film are allowed to have more than one fiscal sponsor since we acknowledge that in some cases you will need more than one fiscal sponsor for your project. For example, there may be situations where a specific grant requires an in-state sponsor, and, since Milwaukee Film is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization registered in Wisconsin, we may not be able to sponsor you for certain grants in other states. In this case, you are free to pursue secondary fiscal sponsorship with a local organization in the state where you will be applying for the grant. We do, however, request that you notify us when you receive grants through your other fiscal sponsors. If this is not communicated, your fiscal sponsorship with Milwaukee Film may be revoked.

Does Milwaukee Film help me raise money for my project?

Milwaukee Film does NOT help filmmakers raise funds for projects. It is the responsibility of each project team to raise funds for their projects. We typically have at least one workshop each year for local filmmakers to learn more about and/or hone their fundraising skills. Fiscally sponsored projects are also eligible to have draft grant materials reviewed by Milwaukee Film staff, and as always, we are available to answer any other questions and provide guidance.

Does Milwaukee Film hold any creative rights over the finished film?

As your fiscal sponsor, Milwaukee Film does not interfere with intellectual property rights over the film. We act as a mediator between donors and the filmmaker and ask that you include our logo in all printed/online materials during the duration of our fiscal sponsorship relationship as well as in the film's end credits.

For a period of one (1) year following completion of your project, Milwaukee Film will hold right of first refusal to contract to present the first public screening of your project within the territory of Milwaukee, Waukesha, Kenosha, Racine, Ozaukee, Walworth, or Washington counties.