

CREATIVE CONTENT INCENTIVE PROGRAM GUIDELINES



Program Qualifications

To qualify for this program, the Project is required to:

Provide end credit to the City of Austin by displaying the Austin Film Commission's "Made in Austin" logo or the words *"Produced with the support of the City of Austin."* The logo or text should be displayed for a reasonable amount of time, comparable to the amount of time allotted to other credited entities.



Provide Electronic Press Kits (EPK) with images and additional assets to include but not limited to press contacts, summary of the project, location credit and quotes on shooting in Austin to the City of Austin and Visit Austin as requested for promotional purposes.

Be an approved applicant for production incentives from the Texas Film Commission in one of the following categories: film & television projects, video game projects, commercials or visual effects. Alternatively, if a project is not approved or eligible for the Texas Moving Image Incentive Program, projects may provide additional information to be considered for CCIP (Exhibit B).

Projects must pay workers at least the City's current Living Wage (which is \$22.05 as of 2026), and for video game and visual effects projects provide health insurance benefits, which will be extend benefits to same-sex partners and their dependents.¹

Complete an online training with the City's Small and Minority Business Resources (SMBR) prior to the first day of filming and submit the list of contracts for the project after production is completed for review by SMBR.

The primary place of business for the company's project must be within the City of Austin's Desired Development Zone.

Projects seeking an incentive under another Chapter 380 Program, may not count the same jobs or payroll toward a Creative Content Incentive Program incentive. Projects may not involve any new permanent construction or leasehold improvements; such projects are more appropriate for another

¹ Requirement applies to all positions that will be included in incentive amount.

Chapter 380 Program.²

Incentive Amount

The maximum incentive per Project will be 2.5% of the wages paid to local residents. Local residents is defined as individuals whose payroll address is within the Austin Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (Travis, Hays, Williamson, Bastrop, and Caldwell Counties).

The award maximum is \$150,000 per project per fiscal year. Should funding be available in the last quarter of the financial year, this limit will be removed.

Projects will be scored and allocated a percentage amount based upon their score. The total award amount will be estimated at the time of agreement execution. An award amount may be within a variance of up to 10% of the award estimated at the time of agreement, which shall be based on achievement of commitments. The total award amount will be capped at an amount not to exceed that variance.

Project Points	Percentage amount awarded to the project
0-49	N/A
50-75	1.5%
76-100	2.5%

Application

The Creative Content Incentive Program is a competitive grant program, as such, the submission of an application does not guarantee acceptance into the program. Not all projects meeting the minimum qualifications will receive a grant. The City of Austin considers a variety of factors including, but not limited to, the current and likely future effect on the promotion of Austin's historic, cultural, natural or man-made resources, as well as the current and likely future economic impact on Austin through direct production spending, as well as business development and tourism opportunities. The project's likely distribution and / or exhibition is also considered.

The completed application must be received by the City of Austin's Economic Development Department no earlier than 180 calendar days and no later than 5:00 PM Central Standard Time on the fifth (5th) business day prior to the first day of principal photography or, for video games the first day of asset creation and for animation the first day of commencement of layout:

Applications will be reviewed as they are received with a response to the application within three months of receipt. For applications with a potential award over the City Manager's Spending Authority (currently \$74,000) approval will need to go to City Council, which could lengthen this timeline. Applicants should not assume approval of their project.

Incentive Agreement Approval, Term and Funding Source

The City Manager is authorized to approve an agreement for any Project that is eligible for less than the

² Projects must not have new permanent construction or leasehold improvements as central components of the project and no local wages claimed for the purposes of a CCIP grant may be wages for permanent construction or renovation labor.

City Manager's spending authority (\$74,000 in FY2025). An agreement for a Project will require City Council approval when the incentive payment would exceed the City Manager's spending authority.

Agreements between the City of Austin and production companies will generally have contract terms of one year. Applicants will be approved for CCIP incentives on a first-come, first-serve basis until funding for the given fiscal year has been allocated.

At least \$250,000 within the Economic Incentives Reserve Fund will be set aside for this program in Fiscal Year 2026.

Performance-Based Payments

Payments under this program will be performance-based, meaning that payments will not be issued until after the production company has provided all required documentation and the City of Austin has confirmed compliance. Production will have 60 days from the end of production in Austin to complete all reporting requirements.

The incentive payment will be based on the Project's actual local spend on wages, provided that the actual spend does not deviate more than 10% from the estimated spend provided to the City in the Application and does not exceed the City Manager's spending authority if the incentive was not approved by the City Council. In no case will the incentive be based on more than 110% of the estimated spend.

No funds will be awarded retroactively for this program. Projects must not have begun principal photography or layout before applying for this program.

The following resolutions and ordinances are waived for production companies receiving a CCIP grant: Resolution No. 20041028-3, Resolution No. 20071206-049, Ordinance No. 20091001-011, Resolution No. 20120112-058, and Resolution No. 20131024-056. In alignment with existing City incentives offered to the film and television industry (see Ordinances # 050127-41 and #20080306-038), Projects do not need to be competitive to qualify for this program.

EXHIBIT A: INCENTIVE CALCULATION EXAMPLE

Total Spending on Wages for Local Residents:	\$15,000,000
Peace Officer Days Utilized ³	30
Total Induced Household Spending*	\$3,400,000
Project Score	80
Project Days	100

BENEFITS*	\$249,850
COSTS	
Peace Officer Incentive (Via Ordinance No. #20080306-038):	\$16,800
Incidental Municipal Services Cost Estimate*	\$11,600
Total Costs	\$28,400
INCENTIVE	
Creative Content Incentive Program Incentive	\$150,000
NET BENEFITS	
Total Benefits-Total Costs- Incentive Amount	\$71,450
<i>If Total Costs exceeds Total Benefits, then Incentive will be reduced by the difference.</i>	
<i>*Based on Impact Data Hub analysis</i>	

³ City of Austin Ordinance No.20080306-038 states that the City of Austin will provide productions spending over a million dollars in Austin with up to two police officers- free of charge- for traffic control and other public safety issues, subject to certain requirements and limitations

EXHIBIT B: REQUIREMENTS FOR PROJECTS NOT APPROVED BY THE TEXAS FILM COMMISSION

Projects may be eligible for a Creative Content Incentive Program award if they:

1. Agree to provide the required documents to the City of Austin for compliance verification, are categorized in one of the eligible CCIP project categories and the first day of production has not already occurred.

Required documentation will include:

- Completed City of Austin CCIP application
- Itemized budget estimating qualifying and eligible Austin expenditures
- Content Documentation

2. Receive a content rating of R, MA or M or below in order to be eligible for an award. Commercial content shall be generally approved for public audience.

3. A base line spend of:

- \$150,000 for TV and Film (including Reality TV)
- \$100,000 for Commercial, Video Game and Animation/Visual Effects

EXHIBIT C: DEFINITIONS

1. "Business Day" is a day other than Saturday, Sunday or a Federal or City of Austin holiday.
2. "Cast" includes actors paid by the applicant to perform roles in Austin, including but not limited to, featured actors, extras, stunt performers, voice-over talent, hosts, judges, announcers and roles or performers that appear on a recurring basis, but excluding talk show guests, game or contest show contestants.
3. "Crew" includes independent contractors or employees paid by the applicant to perform work in Austin that are directly contracted and credited for a specific position.
4. "In-Austin spending" or "Austin spend" is the amount of money spent in the City of Austin by a production company during pre-production, production and postproduction of the project.
5. "Principal start date" has different definitions for film, television, commercial, video game and animated projects:
 - For a live-action film, television, reality television or commercial project, "principal start date" is the first day of principal photography.
 - For a digital interactive media production, or visual effects project, "principal start date" is the first day of asset creation.
 - For animated projects, "principal start date" is the commencement of layout date.
6. "Production" has different definitions for film, television, commercial, video game and animated projects:
 - For a live-action film, television, reality television or commercial project, "production" is the period starting the first day of principal photography through the last day of principle photography.
 - For digital interactive media production, visual effects or animated projects, "production" is the period starting the first day of asset creation or commencement of layout through the last day of animation, code freeze and/or final layout.
7. "Austin resident" is an individual who is a permanent resident of the Austin MSA for at least 120 days prior to the principal start date of the project and who has completed a Declaration of Texas Residency Form. Austin MSA includes residents of Travis, Hays, Williamson, Bastrop, and Calwell Counties.
8. "Project" is defined as an individual film, commercial, game, or visual effects project, or one television pilot, miniseries, or season. Production companies are eligible to apply for this program for multiple Projects.