

DEADLINES

Script Competition

Feature Screenplay

- Early Bird Deadline: March 26 (\$45)
- Regular Deadline: April 16 (\$60)
- Late Deadline: May 21 (\$70)

Short Screenplay & Teleplay

- Early Bird Deadline: March 26 (\$35)
- Regular Deadline: April 16 (\$50)
- Late Deadline: May 21 (\$60)

Scripted Digital Series

- Early Bird Deadline: March 26 (\$35)
- Regular Deadline: April 16 (\$40)
- Late Deadline: May 21 (\$45)
- Extended Deadline: July 9 (\$50)

Fiction Podcast Script

- Early Bird Deadline: April 16 (\$20)
- Regular Deadline: May 21 (\$30)
- Late Deadline: July 9 (\$40)

Playwriting Competition

- Early Bird Deadline: April 16 (\$20)
- Late Deadline: May 21 (\$30)

Film Competition

2021 Film Competition

- Early Bird Deadline: March 26 (\$50)
- Regular Deadline: May 21 (\$60)
- Late Deadline: June 25 (\$75)
- Extended Deadline: July 9 (\$75)

2021 Produced Digital Series

- Early Bird Deadline: March 26 (\$35)
- Regular Deadline: May 21 (\$45)
- Late Deadline: June 25 (\$50)
- Extended Deadline: July 9 (\$50)



Girlfriends creator Mara Brock Akil discusses her experience in writing and producing nearly 400 episodes of television at the 2020 conference.

COMPETITION RULES

General Rules - All Competitions

- Once an entry payment has been processed, we cannot provide a refund. If a payment is disputed, the account holder may be subject to any fees.
- All submissions must be accompanied by the appropriate submission fee PER ENTRY and if submitting by mail a completed entry form including authors' original signatures. Please do not send a photocopy of your signature. Make checks or money orders payable to "Austin Film Festival." Only US money orders will be accepted.
- Submissions must be the original work of the applicant(s). Neither the Festival nor its jurists investigates or attests to the authenticity of an applicant's statement of authorship or rights.
- If a submission involves two or more writers as applicants, the monetary prize and any reimbursements will be divided equally among them and only one Typewriter Award will be provided.
- Awards are based on overall merit of the entries. Judges reserve the right not to grant an award.
- AFF reserves the right in its sole discretion to reject or disqualify any ineligible entries, without a refund.
- Selected Scripts, Films, and Plays Winners:
- AFF has no obligation (other than as stated in these rules or on our website) to disclose any of the following information: i) identities of readers, screeners, or judges; ii) notes, feedback, or information relating to the submitted material; and/or iii) details regarding the submission review or selection process.
- Except as explicitly stated, no representations or guarantees are made regarding the feedback or comments provided, or the quality thereof. The opinions of the readers, screeners, or judges are their own and do not reflect the opinions of AFF. AFF explicitly disclaims any liability or responsibility for any comments, notes, or opinions expressed about a submission, whether by AFF or by its readers, judges, and sponsors.
- Winners will be announced on October 23, 2021. The judges' decision is final.
- Winners receiving cash prizes are solely responsible for payment of all applicable local, state, and federal taxes.

Screenplay, Teleplay, and Fiction Podcast Competitions

- All feature screenplays/teleplays/shorts/fiction podcasts (collectively, "Scripts") submitted must be in English.
- The Screenplay, Teleplay, and Fiction Podcast Competitions are only open to writers who do not currently earn a living writing for film or television. TV staff writers are still eligible to submit.
- Scripts must not have been optioned or sold prior to October 23, 2021. Applicants must notify Austin Film Festival ("AFF") or the "Festival" of any changes in status following submission.
- Scripts that have reached the Semifinalist level or above in previous years within any of the Austin Film Festival Competitions are not eligible for resubmission.
- The Teleplay Competition welcomes spec scripts for any currently airing network or cable program AND original pilot scripts. In order for spec scripts to be eligible for consideration, the program must not be canceled prior to the start of the current television season (September 2020). Specs for new programs must have a series premiere date no later than May 2021. Any ineligible spec script will be disqualified and no refund will be provided.
- No show bibles, treatments, or reality show formats will be accepted for the Teleplay Competition.
- Applicants may submit more than one Script in any chosen category. Each entry requires an application, payment, and script (excluding the Enderby Entertainment Award, Horror Award, and Sci-Fi Award, in which only one script is necessary – applies to Screenplay Competition only).
- Returns and Acknowledgments:
- Scripts will not be returned under any circumstances.
- Please include a self-addressed, stamped postcard for each submission if you wish acknowledgement of the receipt of your screenplay/teleplay (mailed-in entries only).
- Online submissions will receive a confirmation email.
- Notification letters will be sent by email and postal mail by mid-September. Semifinalists will be contacted by phone around this time.

Scripted Digital Series Competition

- The Scripted Digital Series Competition is only open to writers who do not currently earn a living writing for film or television. TV staff writers are still eligible to submit.
- Applicants can submit 1-3 episodes, either written or produced, totaling no more than 30 pages or 30 minutes
- Only new series will be considered. Submissions must be the first one to three consecutive episodes of the series' first season.
- All series must be in English or, if applicable, have English subtitles at the time submitted.
- Applicants may submit both filmed episodes and scripted episodes of their series, but each will require a separate application and payment.
- Entrants that advance to the Semifinalist level will be asked to provide a treatment of their vision for the series and how subsequent episodes will unfold.

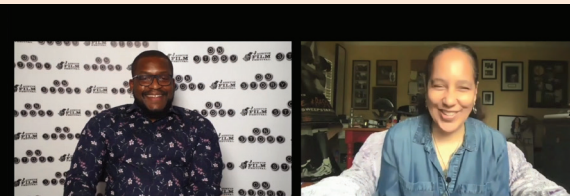
Playwriting Competition

- The Playwriting Competition is only open to writers who do not currently earn a living writing for film or television. TV staff writers are still eligible to submit.
- All plays submitted must be in English.
- The play must not have been optioned, sold, had a professional production, or be scheduled to have a professional production prior to October 23, 2021. A "professional production" is defined as a staged production where the playwrights involved were or will be compensated for their intellectual property or work. Applicants must notify Austin Film Festival ("AFF") or the "Festival" of any changes in status following submission.
- Applicants may submit more than one play.
- Full-length plays, original or adapted, will be accepted. One-act plays, musicals, and screenplays will not be considered.
- Preferred page length is around 60 – 90 pages. Plays will not be disqualified if the page length does not fit these parameters as long as it could reasonably be performed within 90 minutes on stage.
- Be sure that a Character Breakdown precedes the script. Please include age and gender of each character. The breakdown should not exceed one page.

Originality and Permissions; INDEMNITY - All Competitions

- Films/Scripts/Plays must be the original work of the applicant. If a film is based upon another person's life or upon a book or other underlying work, applicant(s) must secure any necessary rights to make such adaptations. However, it is not necessary to submit the adaptation rights agreements to the Festival. Neither the Festival nor its jurists investigates or attests to the authenticity of an applicant's statement of authorship or rights secured. By entering the competition, you are acknowledging that you have secured all necessary rights.
- Applicants are solely responsible for obtaining all necessary rights and permissions for third-party materials included in the film, including but not limited to music, trademarks, logos, copyrights, and other intellectual property rights. AFF expressly disclaims all liability or responsibility for any violations of the foregoing.
- BY SUBMITTING THE MATERIAL, THE APPLICANT HEREBY AGREES TO INDEMNIFY, HOLD HARMLESS, AND DEFEND THE FESTIVAL, ITS EMPLOYEES, DIRECTORS, REPRESENTATIVES, AND AFFILIATES FROM ANY LIABILITY, CLAIMS, AND DAMAGES IN CONNECTION WITH THE SUBMISSION AND FROM ANY FEES AND EXPENSES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO REASONABLE ATTORNEYS' FEES, THAT ANY OF THEM MAY INCUR IN CONNECTION THEREWITH.

For formatting rules and category specifications, please visit www.austinfilmfestival.com/submit



The Old Guard director Gina Prince-Bythewood talks filmmaking at the 2020 conference.

CALL FOR ENTRIES
BLINGO

typos	whiskey	back to grad school	typing THE END	PC crash
existential crisis	call mom	mmm donuts	endorphins	eye on the prize
plot hole!	6am wakeup	FREE SPACE	courage	watch more films
wine	I wrote this?	tenacity	draft #4	staring blankly
fetal position	3am idea	quad espresso	table-read for dog	binge editing

AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL

This project is supported in part by the Cultural Arts Division of The City of Austin Economic Development Department and The Texas Commission on the Arts.

USE LIKE US! /AUSTINFILMFESTIVAL

FOLLOW US! @AUSTINFILMFEST

Late May 21 | Extended July 9

Early March 26 | Regular April 16

SCREENPLAY & TELEPLAY DEADLINES

Early March 26 | Regular April 16 | Late May 21

SCREENPLAY & TELEPLAY DEADLINES

Early April 16 | Late May 21

PLAYWRITING DEADLINES

Early April 16 | Regular May 21 | Late July 9

FICTION PODCAST DEADLINES

Late June 25 | Extended July 9

FILM & PRODUCED DIGITAL SERIES DEADLINES

Early March 26 | Regular May 21

FILM & PRODUCED DIGITAL SERIES DEADLINES

Late June 25 | Extended July 9

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CHANGE IS IN THE AIR

THE 28TH ANNUAL AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL & WRITERS CONFERENCE OCTOBER 21-28

The old adage tells us, change is the only constant in life.

As it so happens, change is the common denominator linking the current state of the world and the unwavering state of the storyteller.

Good characters, strong plotlines, and impactful theme work all depend on change. Does the protagonist stay or does she go? Does the story turn on its heels? Does the message stop us in our tracks? And if it's not too bold to inquire: Does it change us, too?

Meanwhile, here we are in a world, unrecognizable from a mere year ago, perhaps even a changed version of ourselves.

This is a time that is rife with stories—stories in the making, stories crying out to be told, stories yet to be fully realized. Throughout our history, storytelling has been a saving grace: from swapping tales on how to adapt to simply finding solace in our shared humanity. And so it is written: stories will continue to serve a greater purpose as we move through the inevitable changes that await us.

At Austin Film Festival, we are committed to supporting storytellers. Our mission is to champion, to inspire, to entertain, to provoke, and, yes to create change through the transformative power of storytelling.

And we're waiting for you with open arms.

“Austin Film Festival is the best festival in the world for writers.

I got my start at AFF, first as a second-rounder, then as a finalist. Austin launched my career – from placing in the contests, which led directly to getting representation, to, a couple of years later, getting staffed and my career taking off in earnest. I can honestly say I look forward to returning to the Austin Film Festival each and every year. ”

Jimmy Mosqueda, writer of *Legacies* and *Schooled*



Brigitte Hales, Ryan P. Hall, Raamla Mohamed, and Pamela Ribon talk meetings and the process creatives go through from honing a pitch to following up.

CONFERENCE

Austin Film Festival's Writers Conference boasts over 175 panels, roundtables, pitch sessions, and workshops, covering every nook and cranny of the art, craft, and business of storytelling through film, television, and online platforms. By making the pure art of storytelling its compass, AFF has kept a true path, serving as a creative greenhouse for conversations, ideas, and projects by this era's great screenwriters and filmmakers. Industry icons, inventive executives, and indie breakouts will disclose seasoned tips and techniques in what Vince Gilligan coined "a haven for storytellers" or what Jonathan Demme called "a sprawling but intimate movie party where writers are the honored guests and the magic of storytelling is the name of the game."

SCRIPT COMPETITION

From FADE OUT to BREAK IN

It's no secret that Austin Film Festival's script competitions are among the most revered in the industry. Each year, some of the best emerging voices are discovered and go on to have groundbreaking careers. We take great pride in the care that goes into the competition process, from hand-selecting highly qualified readers and bringing on big-name jurors to crafting special opportunities for our entrants at the annual Conference and shepherding them through all the logistics so that their famous last words are not, in fact, "FADE OUT."



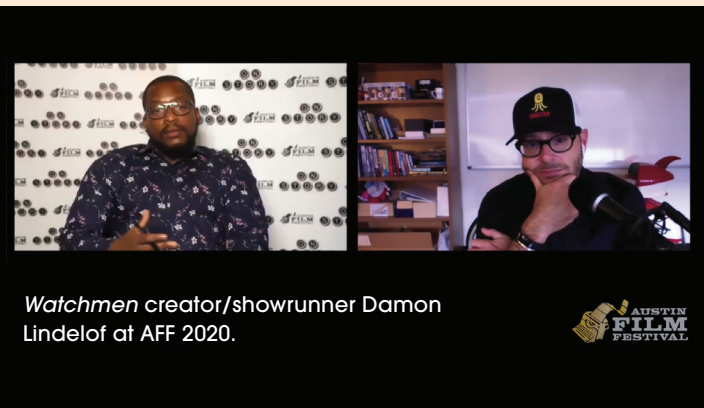
Writer, producer, and director Ed Solomon speaks about his career at the 27th annual Austin Film Festival.

The 360 Treatment

As an organization dedicated to all things story, we take things like good character, solid structure, and happy endings seriously. We've got a well-oiled machine with our competitions, from providing excellent communication to endless resources for our entrants. Just some of the perks of submitting to the script competitions include....

- All entrants receive FREE reader comments, with those who place in the Second Round and above (roughly the top 20%) receiving even more detailed feedback.
- All entrants receive special deals on Badges to attend the annual Austin Film Festival & Writers Conference, with greater discounts available the higher they place.
- Second Rounders and above have the opportunity to participate in exclusive, specially curated panels at the annual Writers Conference. Past sessions have included topics such as finding representation, demystifying the development process, and hands-on revision workshops with legends such as Lindsay Doran, John August, and Craig Mazin.

- Those who advance in the competition also gain access to Second Rounder and above Roundtables at the Conference—intimate, open-ended sessions with agents, managers, writers, and producers.
- Second Rounders and above have the chance to enjoy interactive opportunities such as going out to lunch with big-name Conference panelists and participating in live script reading workshops where selected scripts from the Competition are read aloud by a cast of actors and discussed in a personalized setting during the Conference.
- All Semifinalists, Finalists, and Winners loglines and contact information will be included in AFF's renowned "Producers Book" which is distributed to over 1,000 industry professionals, ranging from agents, managers, producers, and the 2021 roster of Conference panelists.



Watchmen creator/showrunner Damon Lindelof at AFF 2020.

The Judiciary Committee

Your placement in AFF's script competition comes with some serious bragging rights. Not only are you in line for the coveted Bronze Typewriter Award, you can tell your writing group you were read by the likes of industry heavy-hitters such as Richard LaGravenese, Raamla Mohamed, Paula Pell, Eric Heisserer, and Trey Ellis, just to name a few of our recent competition jurors. Last year alone, judges included representatives from Netflix, Lit Entertainment, United Talent Agency, Meridian Artists, Circle of Confusion, Maven Pictures, Walt Disney Television, Bellevue Productions, and Cartoon Network. Believe us when we say: We're all about taking this competition—and your career—to the next level.



Shorts filmmakers Austin Hall (writer/director *Molly Robber*), Zach Visvikis (writer/director *Molly Robber*), Amy Aniobi (writer/director/producer *Honeymoon*), Zora Bikangaga (writer/director *Auntie Zariyah*) talk their craft at the 2020 Austin Film Festival.

The Enderby Entertainment Award

This award returns for another year to offer the winner with a script that has an original concept and distinctive voice that can be produced under \$10 million the opportunity to be mentored by Rick Dugdale and Daniel Petrie, Jr.

Capri Residency Fellowship

The Capri Fellowship Residency hopes to provide a place where writers can find their voice and tell their most compelling stories. The winner of the Drama Feature Screenplay Award will be provided the opportunity to stay at the Capri Residency in Marfa, Texas, for 2 weeks (stay based on Capri Residency availability and must be scheduled from November 2021-December 2022).

Josephson Entertainment Screenwriting Fellowship

Acclaimed producer, Barry Josephson, has been a longtime supporter of AFF since the very first Festival in 1994 when he optioned the winning script from the Screenplay Competition. For a fourth year, Barry will present the "Josephson Entertainment Screenwriting Fellowship" which provides a one-on-one mentorship for the writers of two scripts—one feature script and one teleplay pilot—selected from the Final Round of the 2021 Screenplay Competition.

Rooster Teeth Fellowship

We are excited to announce our third annual Rooster Teeth Fellowship Award. Rooster Teeth will offer a one-on-one mentorship for the writer(s) of the winning fellowship script.

Not ready to submit? Try our Coverage Program!

AFF's Coverage Program provides a detailed constructive evaluation of your script for \$105 (feature script) or \$85 (teleplays and shorts). That's a small fee for a potential life-changing return on your investment. The final Competition entry deadline is May 21 so with a turnaround time of 60 days or less, this script coverage will still give you enough time for feedback before entering.

Submit your coverage request at www.austinfilmfestival.com/submit/coverage-program/

Submit today! Learn more at austinfilmfestival.com

OTHER ENTRIES

The Original POD: AFF's Fiction Podcast Competition

What do the television shows *Homecoming*, *Dirty John*, and *Limetown* have in common? They were all podcasts first. The podcast medium is quickly becoming a lucrative way to break into the industry, and is a storytelling pursuit that can be done from the comfort of your bedroom closet. We're thrilled to embark upon the fifth year with this unique competition, while also helping bridge the space between microphone and phone call with your next job offer. With judges who have hailed from Sony Pictures Television, Authentic, and QCode to Conference panels that explore the nuts and bolts of narrative podcasting, this is a competition with opportunities like no other.

Insider tip: No need to start from scratch. If you already have a play, teleplay, or screenplay, you're almost there. With a little tweaking, your podcast script could be your new calling card.

Setting the Stage: AFF's Playwriting Competition

Ah, the original form of entertainment: the theatre! So much of the technique informing a writer's repertoire stems from the art of playwriting; it is no surprise, then, that this art form is not only beloved by the writing community as a whole, but also is sought out by those in the film and television industry when scouring for new talent. AFF's Playwriting Competition returns in this light for its fifth year, straddling the connections that exists between the stage and screen, and embracing the universal elements of storytelling that writing for theatre embodies. Past jurors have included writers such as Sofia Alvarez, Kelly Masterson, and Brain Yorkey, along with representatives from Samuel French. Finalists have the unique chance to have live readings produced at the Festival, and other advancing playwrights have access to exclusive panels, workshops, roundtables, and networking opportunities.

So really, the only question left is: To submit, or not to submit?

Swipe Right: Scripted and Produced Digital Series Competition

As episodic content grows and diversifies, AFF has expanded its Digital Series Competition to include separate entries for both produced and Scripted submissions. We're looking to discover and promote serial storytellers who can grip an audience with their unique voice and innovative narrative approach.

Filmmakers and screenwriters can submit the first 1-3 episodes of their series, (less than 30 minutes or 30 pages in total). Semifinalists will be required to fill out a treatment form from AFF about how the series will further develop. Past judges have included representatives from Warner Bros, New Form Digital, Rooster Teeth, and Powderkeg among others.

FILM COMPETITION

AFF's Film Competition

With one of the most noteworthy film competitions in the industry, AFF has a rich history of catapulting filmmakers into life-changing careers. (The likes of Jason Reitman, Jeff Nichols, Maggie Carey, Cary Joji Fukunaga, and Ray McKinnon—to name a few—walked through our doors long before they became, well, Jason Reitman, Jeff Nichols, Maggie Carey, Cary Joji Fukunaga, and Ray McKinnon.) Your story may have started on the page or the screen, but we make sure it doesn't stop there. From industry-renowned judges across all categories to specialized Conference sessions and roundtables for entrants and winners to (new!) fellowship and jury advisory opportunities, the red carpet treatment starts the moment you hit "submit."

From Small Steps to Big Leaps

The coveted AFF Bronze Typewriter isn't the only thing you may be going home with in October. Along with the memories made at the annual Festival & Conference each October, we make it part of our mission to connect writers to the people that can inspire and elevate their careers. AFF thrives on discovering the next crop of brilliant stories for distribution deals, such as the **2020 Dark Matters Audience Award Winner *Stalker*** (formerly known as *Blinders*) which was acquired by Vertical Entertainment, or the #AFF26 film *The Bygone*, currently streaming on Netflix. Big leaps for promising artists who took the simple first step of submitting their projects to the Film Competition.

Film Categories:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| ■ Narrative Feature | ■ Documentary Feature |
| ■ Narrative Short* | ■ Documentary Short* |
| ■ Narrative Student Short | ■ Dark Matters Feature |
| ■ Animated Short* | ■ Comedy Vanguard Feature |

*Jury Award winners of our Narrative Short, Documentary Short, and Animated Short categories officially qualify for an Academy Award®.



The Get Together creators Will Bakke, Chad Werner, and Jon Michael Simpson at live screening and Q&A event for the 2020 conference.



Good director Justin Etheredge and lead actor Keith David speak about their film which premiered at the 2020 conference.

NEW! Enderby Entertainment Filmmaking Fellowship Award

The Enderby Entertainment Filmmaking Fellowship Award is open to short films entered under the Narrative Short and Narrative Student Short categories. Founded by Daniel Petrie, Jr. (*Beverly Hills Cop*, *The Big Easy*) and Rick Dugdale, the production company will provide airfare and hotel accommodations for a week-long trip to Enderby's Los Angeles offices, complete with seasoned guidance and the invitation to shadow executives and filmmakers on-site.

NEW! Jury Advisory Program

The Jury Advisory Program will facilitate opportunities for entrants across all nine of AFF's film competition categories sourced from selected in-competition films. Each Jury Winner per competition category and at least one additional selected in-competition filmmaker per category will have the chance to participate in advisory sessions with members of the AFF Jury.

Members of the 2020 Jury included representatives from notable companies such as ESPN Films, Participant, Powderkeg, Stage 13, Sony Pictures Animation, Rain Management Group, Writ-Large, and Verve.

Young Filmmakers Competition

At Austin Film Festival, we strive to support the next generation of storytellers, and are proud to offer our FREE **Young Filmmakers Competition** for filmmakers ages 13-18. At the Young Filmmakers Showcase held at the annual Austin Film Festival, selected animated, documentary, and narrative films from all around the world play on the big screen in front of a supportive audience of Festival-goers. It's never too early to start your filmmaking career!

Submit today! Learn more at: austinfilmfestival.com/yfp/competition/