

### Introduction

The MacArthur Foundation's Media Program supports the production of social-issue documentary films on important contemporary topics. The Foundation believes that compelling stories, told through film, audio, and the web can engender empathy, facilitate dialogue, and inspire actions that contribute to a more democratic society. Over the last 30 years, we have supported over 200 films on topics ranging from human rights to conservation by some of the most critically acclaimed filmmakers in the country. The documentary films we support combine exceptional storytelling with in-depth journalism. They are intended both for a large U.S. broadcast audience (usually on public television) and, often, a specific audience of educators, citizens and organizations working to bring about change. Many of these films have a long life beyond festivals and broadcast and are used by teachers, community leaders, and policymakers, sparking dialogue, understanding, and social and policy change.

### Application Process

MacArthur accepts applications for documentary production funding once or twice a year through the Documentary Open Call.

Online applications will be accepted between **July 15 - 31, 2013**. If your project is selected as a semi-finalist, we will contact you by **September 1** and ask you to submit a full proposal and detailed budget. Funding decisions are expected in November.

**New for 2013:** You must apply through our online application (no emails, please).

### What We Fund

We seek to fund documentary projects that address the significant social challenges of our time or explore important but under-reported topics in a journalistic manner. Domestic and international topics are welcome, and preference will be given to projects that align with one of the foundation's other initiatives. Please take time to familiarize yourself with the areas in which the MacArthur Foundation works at [macfound.org](http://macfound.org) when considering whether to apply.

Support will be provided primarily for **production** and **post-production** activities. We make grants to **U.S.-based production companies and non-profit organizations**, and preference is given to experienced filmmakers with a record of producing films that have been broadcast nationally and internationally and received critical recognition.

In selecting documentary films for support, the Foundation looks for projects that:

- Address important, contemporary social topics - international or domestic.
- Follow an issue over time, providing in-depth reporting that goes beyond conventional news coverage.
- Utilize compelling personal stories to engage viewers and create empathy.
- Appeal to a broad audience because they are accessible, interesting, and they treat different points of view respectfully.
- Are factually accurate and follow best practices in journalism and documentary ethics.
- Align with MacArthur's programmatic interests in the U.S. and International Grantmaking areas.
- Have strong likelihood of broadcast in the U.S. and internationally, and feasible plans for broad dissemination in educational, community, or policy settings.
- Are led by experienced U.S.-based filmmaking teams that have past success in bringing a documentary project to successful completion and reaching broad U.S. audiences.

# 2013 Documentary Open Call Guidelines

Submissions open: July 15 - 31, 2013

## What We Don't Fund

In general, we do not fund biographies, or films that focus primarily on one person. We will only consider documentaries about sports and the arts, provided that they also meet the criteria listed above, i.e., that they illuminate a pressing underlying social issue. We do not fund historical documentaries, advocacy films, or student work.

We do not support projects in pre-production. You must have a 3 - 20 minute sample of footage from the project for which you are applying - a trailer or scene selects. If you can not yet fill this requirement we urge you to wait and apply in the future when your project will be more competitive.

## How to Apply for a Grant

**It is essential that you read and follow the instructions for applying carefully. Though we love talking with filmmakers, we have a very small media staff and cannot answer questions by phone, email, or in-person. We have tried to answer the most common questions in the FAQ section. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.**

1. Please begin by reading this entire document and the **Frequently Asked Questions**. Then, review the issue areas in which the MacArthur Foundation works at [macfound.org](http://macfound.org). We also encourage you to look at the films that we have funded through the documentary film open call in previous years. (*Click on the year of the open call to view supported films: 2012, 2011, 2010*)
2. Prepare your application by closely following the instructions listed below under **Parts of the Application**.
3. After **July 15th, 2013**, create a user ID and login using our online system and fill out your application. (You may save your work and return to edit your application anytime within the submission window before submitting it for review.)
4. Submit your application before **3pm Central Daylight Time on Wednesday July 31st**. We suggest that you not wait until the last minute to submit your application, in case our system becomes jammed by the volume of submissions.
5. After you have submitted your application, you should receive an email confirmation that your application has been received. If you are selected as a semi-finalist, we will contact you by **September 1st** to request a full proposal and detailed budget.

**Note:** Organizations may submit more than one documentary project for consideration, however, each project must be submitted through a separate online application.

## Timeline - 2013 Documentary Open Call

<b>Mid-April</b>	Open Call Guidelines posted on <a href="http://macfound.org">macfound.org</a>
<b>July 15</b>	Online applications open
<b>July 31</b>	Applications due ( <b>before 3pm Central Standard Time</b> )
<b>September 1</b>	Semi-Finalists invited to submit a full proposal with detailed budget
<b>Mid-November</b>	All applicants notified, winners announced

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## Parts of the Application

**All applications must be submitted online by 3pm Central Daylight Time on July 31, 2013.**

**Note:** Please do NOT refer to instructions about applying for grants in other parts of the MacArthur website, which are different from the guidelines provided here.

### 1. Cover Sheet

Provide name, mailing address, email, and phone number for the main contact person for the project (typically the film's producer or director) as well as name and contact information for the executive of the organization to which a grant could be made. MacArthur does not make grants to individuals and does not make grants through fiscal agents or sponsors. You must apply through a non-profit or for-profit incorporated entity that can accurately state that it has "complete financial and editorial control" over the documentary film project for which it is seeking MacArthur support.

### 2. Project Topic

Provide one to four keywords that generally characterize what the film is about. For example, Climate Change, Education, Race, Human Rights, etc.

Include a short description of the film, using less than 50 words. You might want to start with "This film is about..."

### 3. Narrative (1000 words max)

Describe the film in greater detail, providing a clear sense of the film's theme, format, structure, style, and point of view. Please include the current status of the project and explain how MacArthur funds will be used to advance the project. If your project proceeds to the semi-final round of review, you will be asked to submit a more detailed treatment.

### 4. Distribution (300 words max)

Who is the target audience for this project, and how will it reach them? Describe any plans for television broadcast, theatrical release, and community engagement screenings.

### 5. Request, Budget & Current Funding

The amount you are seeking from MacArthur (the typical grant range is between \$50,000 and \$200,000). Include the amount of the total production budget, and list any income (and its source) already secured.

### 6. Production Personnel (100 words max, each)

Provide a short bio of each key member of the production team.

### 7. Video Sample

Include a sample of work-in-progress footage, a trailer, or scene selects from the documentary for which you are applying for funding. This sample should be between 3 and 20 minutes in length.

**Please do not send samples of previous work.**

When you submit your online application for review, you will receive an automatic notification that it has been received. You may log back into the system to check the status of your application at any time.

**Semi-finalists will be notified by September 1, 2013. We kindly request that you not contact us to ask about the status of your application. We are a very small staff and we do not have the capacity to respond to such requests.**

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## **Grantee Requirements**

*The following information is provided for reference, so that you can be aware of the MacArthur Foundation's requirements for making grants before deciding whether to apply.*

All activities that the MacArthur Foundation supports must be for charitable purposes. This means they must not give rise to private benefit or monetary profit to the organization receiving the grant, or any individual.

The MacArthur Foundation will make grants to organizations that do not have a 501c3 tax exempt letter from the IRS, including organizations that are incorporated as for-profit business corporations, with certain conditions, detailed below.

### ***Non-profit corporations with 501c3 status:***

If you are a non-profit corporation with 501c3 status, your organization must be able to provide a letter stating that the documentary seeking funds is a project of the organization, over which the organization has "complete financial and editorial control." The Foundation's Media Program does not make grants to fiscal agents, or fiscal sponsors.

### ***Non-profit corporations without 501c3 status:***

If you are not a tax exempt 501c3 organization, but have incorporated as a non-profit, in addition to the requirements above, your organization or production company must be able to provide the Foundation with proof of incorporation and organizational by-laws, and a Certificate of Good Standing from the state in which you incorporated. In addition, the purpose for which you are seeking funding must be for a charitable purpose. You must accurately state that the resulting documentary will be distributed to the public, at little or no cost, and provide a distribution plan with your proposal.

### ***For-profit corporations:***

If you are incorporated as a for-profit company (a business corporation) applying for a grant to support a documentary film being made in the public interest, in addition to providing proof of incorporation, by-laws or operating agreement, and a Certificate of Good Standing from the state in which you incorporated, you must be able to accurately state in writing that all professional fees are being charged at or below cost, and that the project will not give rise to a profit for the organization, or anyone else, and provide a production project budget that supports your statement. You must also be able to accurately state that the resulting documentary will be distributed widely to the public, at little or no cost, and provide a distribution plan with your proposal.

### ***Reporting requirements:***

All organizations applying for funding through the Documentary Open Call must be prepared to keep detailed financial records of any expenditures of the grant funds, and report these to the Foundation on a yearly basis for the duration of time during which the grant funds are being spent.