

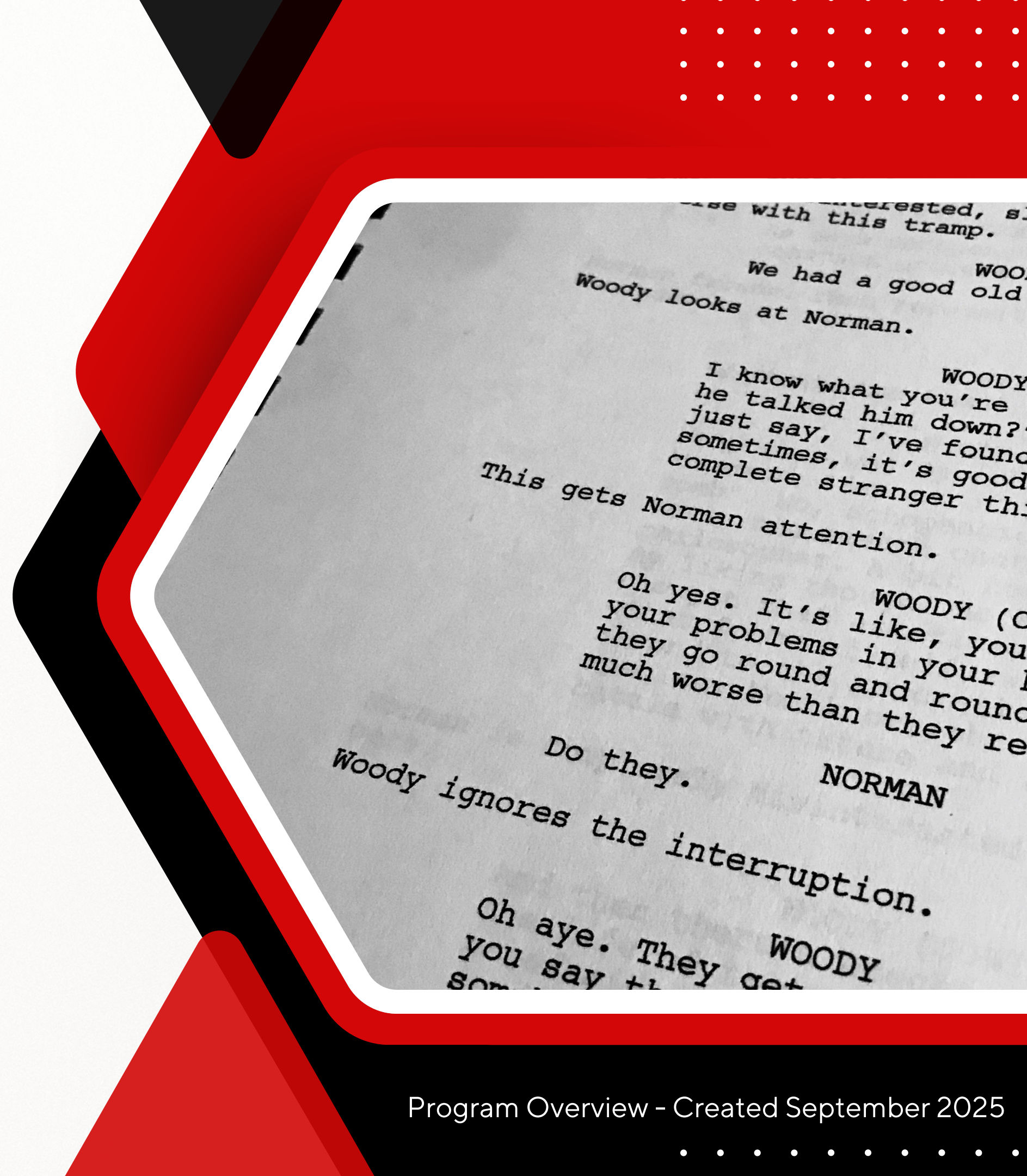


GREATER PHILADELPHIA
FILM OFFICE
WWW.FILM.ORG

The Joan Bressler
Set In Philadelphia
2026 Screenwriting
Competition

October 1, 2025 - April 30, 2026

LEARN MORE



Program Overview - Created September 2025

ABOUT

Annual Screenwriting Competition

Hosted by: *Greater Philadelphia Film Office*

Coordinated by: *Director of Greater Philadelphia Filmmakers*

Assisted by: *Joan Bressler (Former GPFO Director of Greater Philadelphia Filmmakers, SIP Co-Founder) & Brian Wade (Screenwriter, Professor, Director, SIP Co-Founder)*

Origin

While its earliest years trace back to the *Philadelphia Festival of World Cinema* at Penn's Annenberg Center, SIP officially came under the Greater Philadelphia Film Office's wing in 2002 through Joan Bressler and Brian Wade, shortly after the launch of our "Filmmakers" Program.

Who?

Open to all screenwriters, world-wide, who submit a feature length screenplay OR an original TV pilot length screenplay that can be shot in the Greater Philadelphia Metropolitan Area.

Writers do **NOT** need to be from Philadelphia, and scripts do NOT need to be explicitly set in Philadelphia. They must simply be **feasible to shoot in the Philadelphia region** (including surrounding counties).



HISTORY



The *Set in Philadelphia (SIP) Screenwriting Competition* has long been a celebration of emerging voices in film and television. While its earliest years trace back to the *Philadelphia Festival of World Cinema* at Penn's Annenberg Center, SIP officially came under the Greater Philadelphia Film Office's wing in 2002 through Joan Bressler and Brian Wade, shortly after the launch of our "Filmmakers" Program. From the beginning, SIP was built on the dedication of talented readers, judges, and sponsors who believed in nurturing new storytellers.

In its early years, SIP offered both a Grand Prize and the Irene I. Parisi Award, established by acclaimed screenwriter Stephen Rivele in honor of his mother, recognizing a writer under 21. Over the years, additional prizes expanded the competition's reach — including a Student Prize, a Regional Prize, the Prime Time TV Prize, the Oscar Micheaux Award (for writers of the African Diaspora), and the Nina Lo Presti Award (for female writers).



HISTORY

continued

SLP has consistently opened doors for writers — connecting them with industry professionals, mentors, and judges who often champion their work beyond the competition. Many applicants credit SLP with helping launch their careers through advice, opportunities, and exposure.

SLP has thrived because of the generosity of sponsors, the insight of judges, and the dedication of volunteer readers who bring passion and expertise to the process. That spirit of collaboration and opportunity continues to make SLP one of the region's most valued platforms for screenwriters.

In 2025, GPFO changed the screenwriting competition title to ***The Joan Bressler Set in Philadelphia Screenwriting Competition*** in honor of its co-founder for her 30 year commitment to the contest and film industry in Philadelphia.

VIEW PAST JUDGES AND AWARDS.

[Click Here](#)

MISSION & GOALS

Whether you're an experienced writer or fresh talent, we want to celebrate voices in storytelling while highlighting the opportunity and potential of Philadelphia locations by focusing on scripts that can be brought to life locally.

SIP GOALS

- Boost the local film industry & encourage authentic regional storytelling that reflects the diversity and richness of the Philadelphia area.
- Support emerging & experienced screenwriters by offering industry professional feedback & exposure.

What?

All genres accepted.

Showcase the city and surrounding region as a viable and compelling setting for film and television.

A multi-prized screenwriting competition for feature-length or TV pilot scripts that could be filmed in the Greater Philadelphia region.

CATEGORIES

Feature Length Screenplay

Grand Prize Winner

Prime Time TV Pilot

The Oscar Micheaux Award for a

Regional Screenwriter of the African Diaspora

*Nina Lo Presti Award for a **Female
Screenwriter***

Content for Kids

When?

EARLY SUBMISSION:

Deadline to apply is
October 31, 2025

FINAL SUBMISSION:

Deadline to apply is
November 20, 2025

**NEED MORE INFO ON
SPONSORS & AWARDS?**

[Click Here](#)

FILM FREEWAY

Platform for Screenwriters to Apply to the Competition
and all Communications to occur.

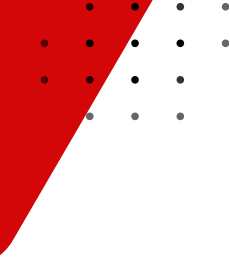
Quick Checklist *(before you click "Submit")*

- ☐ **Script fits page count & format** *(Feature 85–130 pages; TV Pilot <70; 12 pt Courier; numbered).*
- ☐ **Title page shows title only** *(no author name).*
- ☐ **Logline completed.**
- ☐ **"Shootability in Philly region" statement included.**
- ☐ **You reviewed/accepted the Submission Agreement** *(rights retained; confidentiality; no refunds).*
- ☐ **You understand there are no revisions after submission; new drafts require a new entry/fee.**

How?

SIGN UP
HERE

The Joan Bressler Set in Philadelphia Screenwriting Competition proudly accepts entries on FilmFreeway, the world's #1 way to enter film festivals and creative contests.



PRIZES

The Grand Prize - Feature Length Screenplay



The Grand Prize is the competition's highest honor, recognizing the most outstanding screenplay across all categories.

The winner will receive:

\$10,000 Cash Award – presented to the writer whose work demonstrates exceptional creativity, storytelling, originality, and has strong potential for recognition within the industry.

Recognition & Prestige – the winning screenplay will be showcased as the overall competition winner in this category, highlighted in official announcements, and on the GPFO website.

Industry Insight & Spotlight – Finalists will receive constructive notes from our panel of judges, offering valuable professional insights to support writers' growth and guide future work. The winning writer(s) will be introduced to our network of readers, judges, and industry sponsors, providing visibility that extends beyond the competition itself.

Feature-Length Screenplay Requirements:

- *Must be between 85–130 pages in length.*
 - *Written in standard screenplay format.*
- 

PRIZES

Prime Time TV Pilot, Sponsored by Comcast/NBCUniversal

The Prime Time TV Pilot for the most compelling and dynamic prime time TV script.

The winner will receive:

\$5,000 Cash Award – presented to the writer whose work demonstrates exceptional creativity, storytelling, originality, and has strong potential for recognition within the industry.

Recognition & Prestige – the winning screenplay will be showcased as the overall competition winner in this category, highlighted in official announcements, and on the GPFO website.

Industry Insight & Spotlight – Finalists will receive constructive notes from our panel of judges, offering valuable professional insights to support writers' growth and guide future work. The winning writer(s) will be introduced to our network of readers, judges, and industry sponsors, providing visibility that extends beyond the competition itself.

Prime Time TV Scripts (Pilots) requirements:

- *Should be half-hour or one-hour.*
- *Single-camera pilots.*
- *Under 70 pages in length.*
- *Written in standard screenplay format.*

PRIZES

The Oscar Micheaux Award for a Regional Screenwriter of the African Diaspora, Sponsored by VestedIn

Named in honor of pioneering filmmaker and novelist Oscar Micheaux, this award celebrates the creative contributions of the African Diaspora to screenwriting. By highlighting stories rooted in the African Diaspora experience, the prize continues Micheaux's legacy of challenging conventions and amplifying underrepresented perspectives in cinema.

The winner will receive:

\$2,500 Cash Award – presented to the writer whose work demonstrates exceptional creativity, storytelling, originality, and has strong potential for recognition within the industry.

Recognition & Prestige – the winning screenplay will be showcased as the overall competition winner in this category, highlighted in official announcements, and on the GPFO website.

Industry Insight & Spotlight – Finalists will receive constructive notes from our panel of judges, offering valuable professional insights to support writers' growth and guide future work. The winning writer(s) will be introduced to our network of readers, judges, and industry sponsors, providing visibility that extends beyond the competition itself.

Feature-Length Screenplay Requirements:

- *Must be between 85–130 pages in length.*
- *Written in standard screenplay format.*

The Oscar Micheaux Award Requirements:

- *This is a regional prize. Applicants must provide a signed Micheaux eligibility form. Proof of residency in Philadelphia, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, or Montgomery County (legible copy of driver's license, deed, or passport). Co-authors must meet the same requirements.*

- *Both features and TV pilots are eligible . . .*

PRIZES

Nina Lo Presti Award for a Female Screenwriter, Sponsored by Laurie Lo Presti

Nina Lo Presti Award for a Female Screenwriter for women-identified and nonbinary screenwriters, ideally with a connection to the Philadelphia region (resided, worked, matriculated, etc.). Made possible by Lo Presti's daughter, Laurie Lo Presti.

The winner will receive:

\$1,500 Cash Award – presented to the writer whose work demonstrates exceptional creativity, storytelling, originality, and has strong potential for recognition within the industry.

Recognition & Prestige – the winning screenplay will be showcased as the overall competition winner in this category, highlighted in official announcements, and on the GPFO website.

Industry Insight & Spotlight – Finalists will receive constructive notes from our panel of judges, offering valuable professional insights to support writers' growth and guide future work. The winning writer(s) will be introduced to our network of readers, judges, and industry sponsors, providing visibility that extends beyond the competition itself.

Feature-Length Screenplay Requirements:

- *Must be between 85–130 pages in length.*
- *Written in standard screenplay format.*
- *Both features and TV pilots are eligible.*

PRIZES

Content for Kids, Sponsored by Hallee & David Adelman

Content for Kids Prize, sponsored by Hallee & David Adelman, for Writers with a connection to the Philadelphia region (resided, worked, matriculated, etc.) who submit content appropriate for audiences aged 12 and under.

The winner will receive:

\$5,000 Cash Award – presented to the writer whose work demonstrates exceptional creativity, storytelling, originality, and has strong potential for recognition within the industry.

Recognition & Prestige – the winning screenplay will be showcased as the overall competition winner in this category, highlighted in official announcements, and on the GPFO website.

Industry Insight & Spotlight – Finalists will receive constructive notes from our panel of judges, offering valuable professional insights to support writers' growth and guide future work. The winning writer(s) will be introduced to our network of readers, judges, and industry sponsors, providing visibility that extends beyond the competition itself.

Feature-Length Screenplay Requirements:

- *Must be between 85–130 pages in length.*
- *Written in standard screenplay format.*
- *Both features and TV pilots are eligible.*

SIP 2026 Screenwriting Competition

RULES & TERMS

EARLY DEADLINE

October 31, 2025

by 11:59pm EST

\$75.00

Code: SIPEARLYBIRD

(includes processing fee)

FINAL DEADLINE

November 20, 2025

by 11:59pm EST

\$100.00

(includes processing fee)

WINNERS

ANNOUNCED

April 2026

A multi-prized screenwriting competition for feature-length or TV pilot scripts that could be filmed in the Greater Philadelphia region.

Writers do NOT need to be from Philadelphia, and scripts do NOT need to be explicitly set in Philadelphia. They must simply be feasible to shoot in the Philadelphia region (including surrounding counties).



RULES & TERMS

continued

1. Eligibility & General Requirements

1. Screenplay must be able to be produced in the Philadelphia region (including surrounding counties).
 - *Scripts will be judged on their overall quality and the extent to which they project “shootability” in the Greater Philadelphia region.*
 2. All genres will be accepted.
 - *All genres and storytelling approaches are acceptable unless otherwise specified by Prize requirements.*
 3. You may submit multiple feature-length or TV pilot scripts; however, **only one entry per application is permitted**. Each submission requires a separate entry form and fee.
 4. Screenplays that are **currently in production** are ineligible.
 5. If there is more than one writer, **each must sign the release form** for the application to be accepted. **Email mail@film.org with Subject Line “SIP Release Form – Multi-Writers” for the form.**
 6. Judges’ decisions are **final and binding**.
- 

RULES & TERMS

continued

2. Submission Deadlines & Fees

EARLY DEADLINE

October 31, 2025
by 11:59pm EST

\$75.00

Code: SIPEARLYBIRD
(includes processing fee)

FINAL DEADLINE

November 20, 2025
by 11:59pm EST

\$100.00

(includes processing fee)

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

April 2026



RULES & TERMS

continued

2. Submission Deadlines & Fees *con't*

- 1.Submissions must be electronically time-stamped by the stated deadlines. Late entries will not be accepted.
 - 2.Submission fees are non-refundable, regardless of disqualification, withdrawal, or non-selection.
 - 3.Electronic submissions only.
 - 4.Submissions will be processed through the FilmFreeway platform, which will prompt you to include all relevant documents and payment.
 - 5.By submitting, you authorize us to use any trusted third-party online and cloud-based services and databases for hosting, managing, and/or transmitting your submission files.
- 

RULES & TERMS

continued

3. Formatting Requirements

Title Page:

- A title page with only the title must accompany the screenplay.
- No author identification may appear on the title page.
- Scripts will be numbered for confidentiality.

Feature-Length Screenplays

Must be between 85–130 pages in length.

Written in standard screenplay format:

8.5" x 11"

12 pt. Courier Font

Numbered Pages

Simple Front/Back Cover

Prime Time TV Scripts (Pilots)

Should be half-hour or one-hour.

Single-camera pilots.

Under 70 pages in length.

Written in standard screenplay format:

8.5" x 11"

12 pt. Courier Font

Numbered Pages

Simple Front/Back Cover



RULES & TERMS

continued

3. Formatting Requirements *con't*

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy:

Purpose & Disqualification: Set in place to protect the integrity of the competition. The use of AI in any part of the creative process will result in immediate disqualification.

Human Authorship Only: All submissions must be created solely by the entrant(s). Submissions generated in whole or in part by artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including but not limited to ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, or similar systems, are not permitted.

Certification of Originality: By entering the Competition, applicants certify that their submission is entirely their original human-authored work and free of AI-generated content.

Investigation and Enforcement: The Competition reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to request verification of authorship and to disqualify any submission suspected of AI involvement.

Intellectual Property Responsibility: Entrants remain fully responsible for the originality and authenticity of their work. The Competition will not be liable for disputes arising from the submission of AI-generated material.





RULES & TERMS

continued

4. Prize-Specific Eligibility

The Nina Lo Presti Award:

Female screenwriters, ideally with a connection to the Philadelphia region (resided, worked, matriculated, etc.). Both features and TV pilots are eligible.

The Content for Kids Prize:

Writers with a connection to the Philadelphia region (resided, worked, matriculated, etc.) who submit content appropriate for audiences aged 12 and under. Both features and TV pilots are eligible.

The Oscar Micheaux Award:

Applicants must provide a signed Micheaux eligibility form.
Regional award. Proof of residency in Philadelphia, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, or Montgomery County (legible copy of driver's license, deed, or passport).
Co-authors must meet the same requirements.
Both features and TV pilots are eligible.





RULES & TERMS

continued

5. Notifications

- Applicants will be contacted based on the status of their screenplay. Communication will be made through email.
- Applicants are encouraged to subscribe to the Greater Philadelphia Film Office (GPFO) Newsletter for competition updates here.
- Winners will be posted publicly on the GPFO website by the end of January 2026:
 - <https://film.org/greater-philadelphia-filmmakers/sip-screenwriting-competition/>

6. Consideration & Awards

- Submitted screenplays will be considered for all prizes for which they are eligible.
 - Awards are based solely on the overall merit of entries, as determined by the judges.
 - Prizes may not be granted if entries fail to meet the required standard.
 - **All applicants are encouraged to register their work** with the Writers Guild of America (East or West). (Creates a dated record of a writer's claim to authorship) or the U.S. Copyright Office (Confers legal ownership and protects the expression of an idea).
- 



RULES & TERMS

continued

7. Additional Rules & Terms

- **Confidentiality:** Judges and readers are instructed to treat submissions as confidential; however, applicants acknowledge that similarities in theme, story, or concept may occur and that no liability is assumed by the Competition or its affiliates.
 - **Refunds:** No refunds will be issued under any circumstances, including disqualification, withdrawal, or failure to meet submission requirements.
 - **Disqualification:** Submissions may be disqualified if they:
 - Fail to meet formatting or page count requirements.
 - Contain author-identifying information on the title page.
 - Include plagiarized, defamatory, or unlawful material.
 - **Publicity:** By entering, applicants grant permission for their name, headshot, bio, title, and logline to be used in press releases, social media, and promotional materials if selected as a finalist or winner.
- 



RULES & TERMS

continued

7. Additional Rules & Terms *con't*

- **Liability:** The Competition is not responsible for technical issues, data loss, corrupted files, or failed uploads.
 - **Taxes:** Prize winners are solely responsible for payment of any applicable local, state, or federal taxes.
 - **Co-Authors:** In the case of multiple authors, prizes and reimbursements will be divided equally, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by all authors. Only one award designation (certificate, trophy) will be provided.
 - **Rights Retained:** Applicants retain all rights to their submitted work. The Competition will not option, produce, or exploit any submitted material.
 - **Feedback:** The Competition has no obligation to provide notes, feedback, or comments. If feedback is provided, it is not guaranteed and does not reflect the opinions of the Competition.
- 