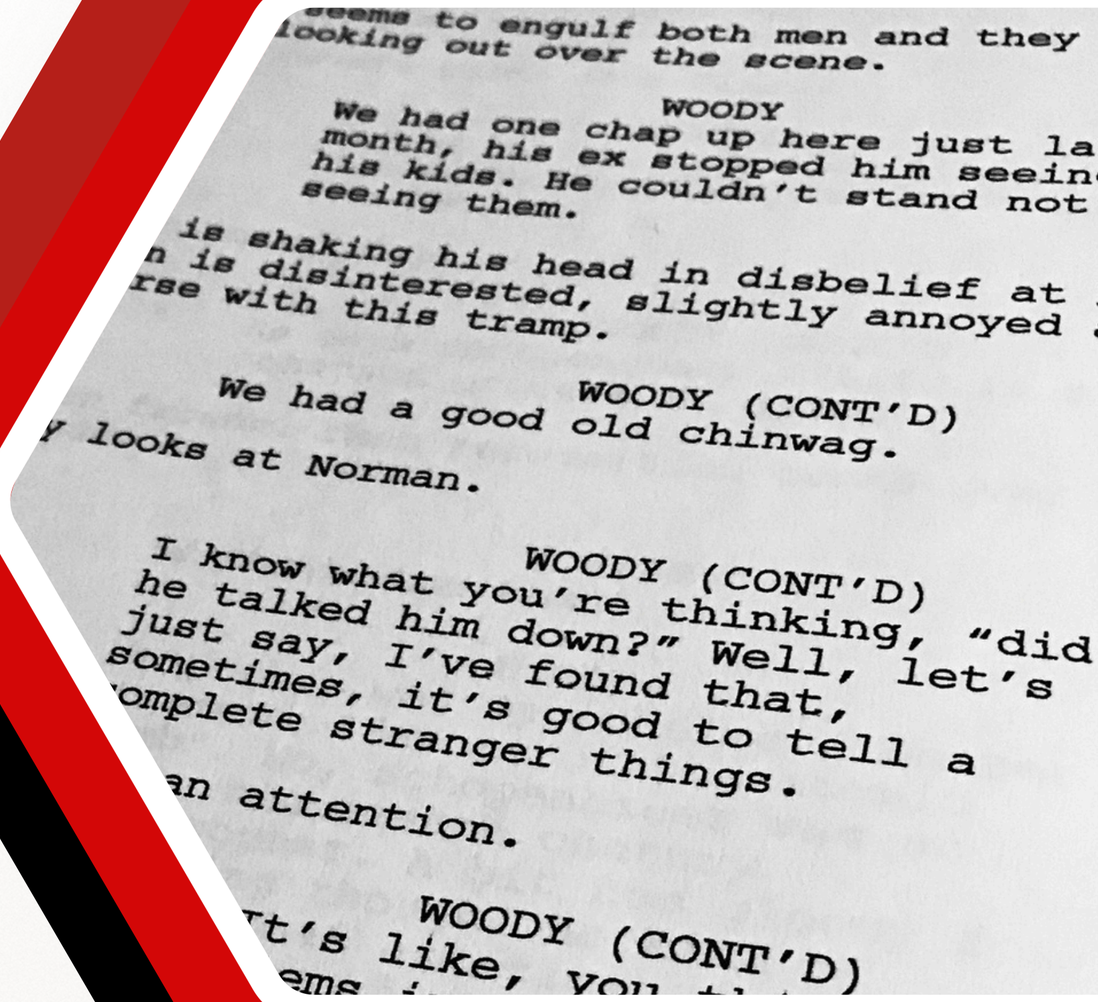
GREATER PHILADELPHIA FILM OFFICE
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The Joan Bressler

Set in Philadelphia 2027 Screenwriting Competition

August 3, 2026 - March 31, 2027

LEARN MORE



Program Overview - Rev Oct 2026

ABOUT

SIP TEAM

Hosted by: Greater Philadelphia Film Office
(Co-Executive Directors Nicole Shiner and Erin Wagner)
Coordinated by: Lena Bhise (Director, Greater Philadelphia Filmmakers)
Assisted by: Joan Bressler (Former GPFO Director of Filmmakers) &
Brian Wade (Screenwriter, Professor & 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 an original feature-length, short film, or 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).

*The Mitchell Creative Alliance Award requires one scene be set at a local college or university and to explicitly name that school in the screenplay.

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,* SIP officially came under the wing of the Greater Philadelphia Film Office (GPFO) in 2002. 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 J. Rivele (*Ali, Nixon*) 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). In 2025, GPFO changed the screenwriting competition title to **The Joan Bressler Set in Philadelphia Screenwriting Competition** in honor of its long-time steward for her 30-year commitment to the contest and film industry in Philadelphia.

HISTORY *continued*

SIP boasts an extraordinary finalist judging panel including Oscar-nominated director and producer **Lee Daniels**, Oscar-nominated and Emmy-winning actor **Colman Domingo**, Emmy-winning actress and producer **Sheryl Lee Ralph**, critically acclaimed creator and showrunner **Brad Ingelsby**, and Emmy-winning actress **Kim Delaney**. Alongside these iconic creators, SIP's panel features working Hollywood executives, network development vice presidents, and literary agents.

SIP 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 SIP with helping launch their careers through advice, opportunities, and exposure. Notable alumni include **Adam F. Goldberg**, the creator of ABC's long-running hit comedy *The Goldbergs,* Emmy-winning writer and Disney executive **Derek Dressler**, and acclaimed director **Jeremiah Zagar**, whose work includes Netflix's sports drama *Hustle*.

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 and encourage authentic regional storytelling that reflects the diversity and richness of the Philadelphia area.

- Support emerging and 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, short film, or TV pilot scripts that could be filmed in the Greater Philadelphia region.

2027 SIP COMPETITION PRIZE CATEGORIES

$10,000
FEATURE LENGTH SCREENPLAY GRAND PRIZE

$5,000
PRIME TIME TV PILOT PRIZE

$5,000
CONTENT FOR KIDS AWARD

$1,500
NINA LO PRESTI AWARD FOR A FEMALE SCREENWRITER

$1,500
MITCHELL CREATIVE ALLIANCE AWARD (SHORT FEATURING LOCAL UNIV/COLLEGE)

When?

EARLY SUBMISSION:
Deadline to apply is
September 15, 2026
Code: SIPEARLYBIRD

FINAL SUBMISSION:
Deadline to apply is
October 19, 2026

NEED MORE INFO ON SPONSORS & AWARDS?
Click Here

FILM FREEWAY

Platform for screenwriters to apply to the competition.

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

- [ ] **Script fits page count & format** *(Feature 85–130 pages; TV Pilot < 70; Short 5-40; 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.**
- [ ] **[NEW THIS YEAR] All entrants are eligible to receive notes on their scripts for an additional fee of $50.** *If you are a finalist, you will be refunded that fee.*

How?

SIGN UP HERE

The Joan Bressler Set in Philadelphia Screenwriting Competition only accepts entries on FilmFreeway. Email or posted submissions will not be accepted.

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 and 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

PrimeTime TV Pilot,
Sponsored by Comcast/NBC Universal

The Prime Time TV Pilot for the most compelling and dynamic primetime 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 and 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 and 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

Content for Kids, Sponsored by Hallee & David Adelman

The Content for Kids Prize, sponsored by Hallee and 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 and 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 and 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.

Content for Kids Screenplay Requirements:

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

PRIZES

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

The 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 and 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 and 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.

Nina Lo Presti Screenplay Requirements:

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

PRIZES

Mitchell Creative Alliance Award, Sponsored by Darla Wolfe



The Mitchell Creative Alliance Award for a short film screenplay with <u>at least one scene</u> set in a university or college in the Greater Philadelphia region. The school <u>must be specifically named</u> in the script. Made possible by Darla Wolfe, the daughter of Richard and Sylvia Mitchell and GPFO board member.

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 and 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 and 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.

Mitchell Creative Alliance Screenplay Requirements:

- *Must be between 5–40 pages in length.*
- *Written in standard screenplay format.*
- *Only short films are eligible.*
- *Must include <u>at least one scene</u> set in a university or college in the Greater Philadelphia area. The school <u>must be explicitly</u> named in the screenplay.*

SIP 2027 Screenwriting Competition

RULES AND TERMS

EARLY DEADLINE

September 15, 2026

by 11:59pm EST

$75.00

Code: SIPEARLYBIRD

(includes processing fee)

FINAL DEADLINE

October 19, 2026

by 11:59pm EST

$100.00

(includes processing fee)

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

March 31, 2027

A **multi-prized screenwriting competition for feature-length, short film,** 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).

*The Mitchell Creative Alliance Award requires one scene be set at a local college or university and to explicitly name that school in the screenplay.

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, short film, 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 SIPCoordinatorGPFO@gmail.com 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

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

TITLE ONLY Cover Page

Short Film Screenplays

Must be between 5-40 pages in length.

Written in standard screenplay format:

8.5" x 11"

12 pt. Courier Font

Numbered Pages

TITLE ONLY Cover Page

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

TITLE ONLY Cover Page

RULES & TERMS *continued*

3. Formatting Requirements

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 or non-binary screenwriters, ideally with a connection to the Philadelphia region (resided, worked, matriculated, etc.).
- Both features and TV pilots are eligible for consideration.

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 for consideration.

[NEW THIS YEAR] The Mitchell Creative Alliance Award:

- Screenplay must include at least one scene set in a university or college in the Greater Philadelphia region. The educational institution must be explicitly named in the script.
- Only short films are eligible for consideration.

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.
- Winners will be posted publicly on the GPFO website by the end of March 2027:
    - **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*

8. Additional Rules & Terms

- **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.

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Ready to Submit?

CLICK HERE

Use the QR code to visit the SIP website for more details

