

DAY ONE SHORTS

Day One Shorts is a series of short films by young emerging filmmakers from across Aotearoa. These shorts explore cultural, social and political issues by taking story risks, pushing the envelope, and looking to the future.

Day One Shorts 2025

Submission Toolkit

The Day One Shorts 2025 Call for Applications invites;

- 1) funding applications from teams with new directors 18-29 years old in Aotearoa to make their first professionally funded short film with urgent themes that matter to them, we will be aiming to commission two films with a te ao Māori lens / or with 50% or more of te reo Māori.

AND/OR

- 2) A new sub-category, 30+ is now available for teams with directors aged 30 and above. We anticipate that up to two films out of the total eight will be commissioned in this category. To apply for this category each director/writer or director must provide a brief description of their filmmaking journey and how/why they are a new filmmaker.

We also have a **New Filmmaker Placement**, if you are aged 16-24, you can apply here. This is an unpaid placement where you can shadow one of the Day One Shorts films commissioned in 2025.

If you want to check your eligibility for either of these categories, please email proposals@dofilm.co.nz

You are welcome to apply for either of these if you meet the eligibility criteria.

The deadline for *Day One Shorts* applications is **11:59pm, Friday 18th October 2024**

The deadline for the *Day One Shorts New Filmmaker Placement* applications is **11:59pm, Friday 25th October 2024**

Availability For Key Production Events	2
Timeline	3
Application to make a Day One Shorts Film	3
What we're looking for in the films we commission;	5
Story Sovereignty	6
Eligibility	6
NEW: 30+ Sub-Category	7
Production Budget	7
Workshops	7
Production Mentors & Script Consultants	8
Day One Shorts New Filmmaker Placement	8
Application to be a Day One Shorts New Filmmaker Placement	8
Selection Process	8
Enquiries	9
FAQs	9

Availability For Key Production Events

If you are commissioned, you will need to be available to:

- engage in our contracting process 23rd - 30th January 2025
- attend Workshop #1 in Auckland 31st Jan & 1st February 2025

Please ensure you have these dates pencilled in your calendar now.

Production teams will need to be able to commit sufficient time and availability to complete their productions in accordance with the Day One Shorts production schedule.

In addition to being available to meet the needs of their own productions, this will also mean being available for:

- **Shortlisted application meetings:** 25th November - 6th December 2024
- **Day One Shorts, Workshop #1 in Tāmaki Makaurau:** 31st Jan & 1st February 2025
- **Colour Grading and Sound Mixing sessions in Tāmaki Makaurau** late June - early July 2025
- **Day One Shorts, Workshop #2 in Tāmaki Makaurau** early to mid July 2025
- **A Premiere Screening event in Tāmaki Makaurau** end of August 2025

Timeline

Application Deadline: 11:59pm (no later) Friday 18th October 2024

Shortlisted applications contacted: Friday 22nd November 2024

Meetings with Shortlisted Production Teams: 25th November - 6th December 2024

Deadline for Resubmission: 5pm, Monday 6th January 2025

Contracting: 23rd - 30th January 2025

Day One Shorts Workshop #1 in Tāmaki Makaurau: January 31st & 1st February 2025

Production to Rough Cut stage: February - May 2025

Sign off of Final Cuts: Late May - Early June 2025

Grading and Audio Post-Production: Late June - Early July 2025

Completion of Delivery Requirements: July 2025

Day One Shorts Workshop #2 in Tāmaki Makaurau: Early-Mid July 2025

Premiere, Promotion and Online Release: August - September 2025

Application Requirements to make a Day One Shorts Film

Production teams who would like to make one of the eight funded films need to submit the following via the application google form no later than 11:59pm, Friday 18th October 2024.

1. A completed application google form

[Day One Shorts - Application Form](#)

2. A proposal (PDF preferred) of up to 10 pages, including:

- **Logline**

The logline is a statement, in 35 words or less, that reflects the narrative 'hook', premise or essential dramatic dilemma inherent in the proposed short film. This is not a tagline for a movie poster, but rather a one or two-line summary of the film's essential storyline. Keep in mind that we publish the title and sometimes the logline of all projects we fund. If you want to keep any details confidential please let us know, and provide us with another version we can publish.

- **Brief synopsis**

The synopsis is a highly condensed story outline of no more than 200 words. Ideally it will convey the tone & genre of the film, and reflect the key emotional journey of the film. Please note that your synopsis must include the film's ending.

- **Detailed narrative outline up to one page**

The narrative outline should touch on every key beat of the story; clearly reflecting the thematic spine of the film.

- **Director's Treatment**

Your director's vision shows us how you see the project coming to life on screen. We expect the director's vision to touch on:

- *Interpretation of, and engagement with concept themes.*
- *Approach to working with actors: casting, rehearsing and performance.*

- Genre/sub-genre and why you have chosen this form.
- Style and look (mood, tone, costume, setting, locations).
- Soundscape and Music.
- Methodology (approach to filming).

This could also incorporate a look-book, visual references, location overview and/or costuming plans.

○ **Creative Team Statement**

This is a brief statement (i.e. half a page) that covers the creative team's (ie director, writer, producer) personal connection to the story and/or subject matter.

○ **Team Bios**

Short bios of 200 words max, highlighting the professional and life experience of the key production team members, containing information relevant to their proposed role. Please list at the end of your bio all work, study or other relevant commitments of the key production team members (i.e, director, writer, producer) during 2025 and how those commitments are compatible with both the production schedule and the selection process for Day One Shorts. Please take note that we require these bios and commitment declarations to be supplied both in the Application Form, and in the 10 page .pdf proposal.

○ **Links to previous films by key production team members**

If anyone in your key production team has made self-funded short films, music videos, 48Hours short films, school/university films, please provide links with password (if applicable) for us to watch.

○ **Production schedule or timeline indicating how the film can be produced to final cut stage from February to mid-June 2025**

Please make sure this timeline covers;

- Development time between funding, and pre production; working with your appointed industry mentor to strengthen your story and production plans
- Your proposed overall production schedule (pre-production and shoot)
- Your post-production schedule, including three opportunities for our team to review your fully assembled film cuts and provide feedback, and meaningful time in between for you to implement our feedback.

○ **Audience Engagement and Marketing Plan identifying the audiences for the film, and how the production team plans to engage audiences and promote their film**

In one page cover target audience, digital and social media marketing plan. This could also include marketing concepts (key art, sketches, infographics) and information about an Impact Campaign you might be planning to run alongside the distribution of this film. For target audience, please be reasonably specific, for example:

- o Primary audience: 18-39 years, female skewed, urban, digital native
- o Secondary audience: 40-60 years, male/female, progressive, arts-literate

3. A production budget using the Budget Template:

[Day One Shorts - Budget Template](#)

- Please submit this document to us as an Excel file or Google Sheet (i.e, **not** pdf or numbers file)

4. Whether the film is to be a scripted drama, documentary or other genre, one of the following: (PDF preferred)

- a full script
[See drama and documentary script examples here.](#)
- OR
- a credible scripting plan
e.g, the plan could be to devise the script from an improvisational process during the resubmission phase

Please note that if your film is shortlisted, a full drama or documentary script will be required in the re-submission process.

5. One character referee contact including a phone number and email address is needed for each member of the key production team (i.e, Director, Writer and Producer only) and will only be requested in the application form.

What we're looking for in the films we commission;

- Innovative, imaginative, relevant or thought-provoking.
- Short films that highlight the change or impact you want for the future. Previous films have covered topics on society, body image, health, housing, gender identity, human rights, mental health, the environment, culture including preservation as well as integration into NZ society and more.
- A curated programme of films and film-makers that are diverse in content and personnel.

Any genre is welcome - drama, documentary, music video, dance film or whatever - and so is live-action, animation, or anything that you feel has not been seen or represented before and together they will spark ideas, stimulate debate and convey important information.

There are a number of identified voices that are under-represented in our media landscape, and thanks to NZ On Air's research in this area, we're now able to name those, and we'd like to specifically fund films from/by those under-represented voices, because reflecting and developing Aotearoa's identity and culture is important to us. Filmmakers who are queer, trans, non-binary, Māori, Indigenous, Middle Eastern, Latin American, African, people of colour, disabled, neurodiverse, parents, are/have been system-impacted, live rurally in Aotearoa, are immigrants, and anyone who has experienced systemic challenges and/or gender-based discrimination are encouraged to apply.

See NZ On Air's 2023 Diversity Report for more information, [here](#).

Day One Shorts, will be aiming to commission at least two films that convey te ao Māori and ideally have at least 50% te reo Māori content. And up to two films by a plus 30 yr old Director, or Director/Writer.

Story Sovereignty

Is important to us here at Day One. Before you dive deep into your film, ask yourself if you have the authority, the responsibility, the perspective and the permission to use the elements in your film, or tell this story. How are you treating them? Does your work contain cultural references that don't belong to you; and do you need to connect with the guardians of that culture, the kaitiaki, to have a more complete understanding, or to get clearance to use those things?

Eligibility

This initiative is targeted towards new and young film-makers. Day One Shorts exists to provide a platform for the next generation of voices in New Zealand's media landscape. Our mission is to support these fledgling film and screen makers with their first professional production funding experience, all the while encouraging them to explore the themes that are most important to them, and begin to discover and articulate their unique voice along the way.

The contracted production teams must include;

- a Director
- a Producer

There may be variations on the above (e.g Writer/Director or Co-Producers) but the team must have a producer who is separate to the director.

Applications are invited only from teams whose **Director, or Writer/Director:**

- Is aged 18 - 29
i.e born between 1 July 1995 and 1 February 2007
- Is aged 30+ *if they can illustrate why they are eligible to apply for this year's new sub-category (see below)*
- Is currently a New Zealand citizen or resident (proof of residency or, visa will be requested)
- Has not previously received production funding from NZ On Air, Te Māngai Pāho or the New Zealand Film Commission
This includes either directly or via another scheme for new or emerging film-makers funded by either of those agencies.
Exceptions to this rule include where a film-maker has received a commission to make a music video that has been funded by NZ On Air or where a filmmaker has received talent development or mentorship funding from one of the above funding bodies. We reserve the right to make further exceptions where appropriate.

NEW: 30+ Sub-Category

If you are over 30 years old and can show you are still a new and emerging filmmaker, we want to hear from you.

This year we are opening up a sub-category for applicants that can illustrate they are still new and emerging directors who are older than 30 years. To apply for this category each director/writer or director must provide a brief description of their filmmaking journey and how/why they are a new filmmaker into the provided google application form.

We are looking to commission up to two film projects within this sub-category.

Production Budget

Each commissioned production team will work with The Day One Shorts team, who will manage and executive produce the series.

Each production will have a contracted budget of \$15,000 for documentary, and \$20,000 for a scripted drama, which will be provided to the production teams in five instalments to finance their films from pre-production to final cut and online release.

The production budget;

- is expected to include payment for everyone involved in making the film (including those in key roles such as Producer, Director, Producer/Director, Co-Producer and/or Writer).
- is not expected to include grading and audio mixing, which will be organised separately with the film-makers by the Day One Shorts team.

[Here is a video to explain what a film budget is and going through the Day One Shorts budget template.](#)

Workshops

Each director, writer and producer from each production team will attend two workshops in Auckland across the process of making their film. These workshops will give them the opportunity to meet, connect and network with the other film-makers alongside participating in focussed talent development workshops. Workshop #1 covers the challenges inherent in producing a film within a tight time-frame, information about all the requirements teams will need to meet including health and safety plans, scheduling, cost reports, professional directors sharing their insights around directing actors, and directing documentary subjects, and more. Workshop #2 covers identifying and connecting with your audience, working with a publicist, and sustainable career planning/development.

Production Mentors & Script Consultants

Each production team will be assigned a production mentor from the New Zealand film industry. The mentors will support them as they navigate their creative and logistical journey from commissioned proposal to final cut.

All teams will also be given the opportunity to work with a professional script or documentary development consultant from the New Zealand film industry.

Day One Shorts New Filmmaker Placement

An important part of the kaupapa of Day One Shorts is to create pathways and opportunities for new filmmakers to learn, upskill and meet new collaborators. In line with this aim we have a placement available to new filmmakers (18-24 years old) to join the filmmaking teams on set and be privy to the process of collaborating with a commissioning partner. If successful, your team may be assigned a New Filmmaker to shadow you on set. This is an unpaid role and the focus is learning through observation.

Application to be a Day One Shorts New Filmmaker Placement

If you'd like to apply for the Day One Shorts New Filmmaker Placement, complete this form [Day One Shorts - New Filmmaker Application Form](#) before the deadline of 11:59pm, Friday 25th October 2024.

Selection Process

Producers for shortlisted applications will be contacted by 5pm on 22nd November 2025.

If you are shortlisted, you will be invited to a meeting with our team sometime between 25th November - 6th December 2024 at our offices in Auckland, or over a video call - to discuss our feedback for your resubmission. Each meeting will last approximately one hour.

In those meetings the production team for each shortlisted application will have an opportunity to pitch their project face-to-face. There will also be discussion regarding further development of the application/proposal.

Producers for shortlisted applications will need to provide an evolved or updated document by 5pm on Mon 6th January 2025.

The eight Day One Shorts will then be selected in consultation with the Screen Partners (RNZ & Whakaata Māori) and commissioned in late January 2025.

Enquiries

Please email any enquiries about Request for Proposals to proposals@dofilm.co.nz

Before emailing your enquiry - make sure to check out our [FAQs](#), and see if your question has already been answered.

FAQs

How many films are funded in a Day One Shorts series?

Since 2017, Day One Shorts (formerly, Someday Stories) has funded six films per series. In 2024 and 2025, we are pleased to be funding eight films.

How long can my short film be?

Typically the screentime is between 9-12 minutes in duration. Refer to our former docos and dramas via our website for reference.

Scripts typically represent one minute of screentime, so a 9-12 page scripted screenplay is welcome. Of course, some scripts can be longer or shorter in length yet still meet the 9-12 minute required duration.

Age Eligibility

There are age restriction variations for specific production roles and categories listed below but a team must comprise a producer who is separate to the director.

If you are applying for our main category as a sole Director or Director/Writer, you need to be aged between 18 - 29 yrs, i.e born between 1 July 1994 and 1 February 2006.

If you are applying as a sole writer (and not director) in any team, you can be any age.

If you are applying as Producer or Co-Producer within a team, you may exceed the 29yr age limit, as we acknowledge this role is the most challenging to fulfill and therefore we reserve the right to ease the age restriction for this particular role. If a producer is aged 29 or over, please let us know.

If you are applying for the new 30+ sub-category (i.e, writer/director or, director) this year we have opened up a new sub-category for applicants that can illustrate they are still new and emerging directors. To apply for this category each director/writer or director must provide a brief description of their filmmaking journey and how/why they are a new filmmaker upon applying.

Remembering, Day One is a youth-focussed project targeted towards uplifting the voices of our youth. It is intended to provide opportunities for new and emerging filmmakers.

Head of Department and other Crew Roles Age eligibility

NB: Additional people working on the film such as the Writer, Producer, key HOD's, and cast & crew members are not required to meet the above age eligibility requirements.

If you have questions or you would like to discuss these eligibility requirements please email proposals@dofilm.co.nz

What if I don't have a producer?

Please get in touch with us before you apply - we will try our best to connect you with a person who might be interested. You can still apply without a producer but if shortlisted you will need to find a producer in order to move forward.

If I produce, can I also co-direct?

We encourage lead producers to commit themselves to producing 100% only. Why? Because experienced producers are hard to find, and we want all emerging producers in our initiative to get as much as they can out of the experience of producing their short film. If you are a producer interested in learning to direct then we encourage you to apply as a director - if you meet the age eligibility of course.

Is it true your films release online? Will this make them ineligible to film festivals here and internationally?

All our films are contracted to release online via our screen partner's platforms; RNZ and Whakaata Māori, as well as our website, Facebook, Vimeo and YouTube channels. Each of our screen partners have a 3 month exclusivity period where any additional distribution needs to be signed off.

It's true that this will make the films ineligible to enter some film festivals here and overseas, however we encourage you to check the eligibility criteria for the festivals you're interested in, as many film festivals already accept short films that are available to watch online. As Day One Shorts is a web series, the films are technically web series' episodes and are therefore eligible for all web series festival categories.

Does our submitted proposal need to have a design component?

We highly recommend your proposal have a design component that is highly visual and reflects the mood / tone / world of what you want to achieve through the medium of film. Put your best foot forward. A plain word document with no imagery at all makes it very hard for ourselves and our screen partners to imagine. We want to be excited and inspired by your proposal.

If my genre is animation, experimental, or AI... can I include some test footage in my proposal?

Absolutely, yes. The more we get a sense of your filmic vision and world the better.

I've written an amazing script that I want to direct but I have no experience of the iwi and gender the story relates to, can I still submit it?

We are big on supporting filmmakers directing and creating films that are authentic to their lived experience. E.g, if a filmmaker is not of the specific culture, gender, iwi perspective they are exploring in their script or documentary concept, we would want a strong justification for why they feel this is their story to tell.

Multiple Submissions?

Individual film-makers may be involved in more than one application but upon being selected may only participate in one key contracted role (e.g, Producer, Director, Writer, etc) within one production team.

Compatible with Full-Time Study?

Making a film for Day One Shorts is unlikely to be compatible with full-time study.

Exceptions may include films being made as part of course requirements however they would still need to be made within the timeframe required for Day One Shorts.

A letter may need to be provided by the tertiary institution outlining how making the film will be compatible with course requirements and commitments. The Day One Shorts team would also need to liaise directly with relevant course personnel both prior to commissioning and during production of the film.

Compatible with Full-Time Work?

While making a film for Day One Shorts can be compatible with full-time work - it requires flexibility from your employer. But you will need to understand that it will take up the majority of your time outside of work.

Help! I don't know how to do a budget!

Please just do what you can and submit your application with an attempt at a budget. Depending on the strength of your application and your team, we will support you as best we can to craft a realistic budget. (Hint: if there is a helicopter in your script, it's likely to blow the budget). [Here](#) is a video that goes through what a film budget is and specifically the Day One Shorts template.

What if I've been funded before?

Directors applying to Day One Shorts who have previously received **production** funding from either NZ On Air, Te Māngai Pāho or the New Zealand Film Commission are ineligible to apply for Day One Shorts.

Exceptions to this rule include where a Director has received a commission to make a music video that has been funded by NZ On Air or where a filmmaker has received talent development or mentorship funding from one of the above funding bodies. We reserve the right to make further exceptions where appropriate.

NB: Additional people working on the film such as Writer, Producer, key HOD's, and cast & crew members are not required to meet the above funding eligibility requirement.

If you have questions or you would like to discuss this in more detail, please email proposals@dofilm.co.nz

How do you select a Day One Shorts film?

We select films in consultation with our screen partners from RNZ and Whakaata Māori. Day One Shorts is a curated series whereby each film is carefully chosen to create a balanced selection of films. This will include at least two films that convey te ao Māori and ideally have at least 50% te reo Māori content. We are always looking to commission films from underrepresented communities within Aotearoa; Folks who are queer, trans, non-binary, Māori, Indigenous, Middle Eastern, Latin American, African, people of colour, disabled, parents, are/have been system-impacted, live rurally in NZ, are immigrants, and anyone who has experienced systemic oppression and/or gender-based violence are encouraged to apply.

What stories do Day One Shorts want to see being submitted?

First and foremost we want to see scripts that have the most meaning for you. We like films that have a strong 'why' behind why you want to tell them. We welcome all genres and perspectives.

How much funding do dramas and docos receive?

Dramas receive \$20k

Documentary's receive \$15k

