# TABLE OF CONTENTS

3. ABOUT THE BIG TELL  
4. MEET THE TEAM  
5. IMPORTANT DATES  
6. APPLICATION TIPS  
8. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS  
17. CONTACT US
About The Big Tell

The Big Tell is a regional filmmaking program offering grants for the production of 5-minute minidocumentaries that feature stories from California’s great Central Valley.

The Central Valley Community Foundation will award ten grants of $5,000 each for the creation of short films about the amazing people, places, and activities that make the Central Valley so remarkable and unique.

This is the perfect opportunity to either get your start in filmmaking or work on a passion project close to you. Winners will also be mentored by Emmy-nominated documentarian Sascha Rice.
ABOUT CVCF

Mission: To cultivate smart philanthropy, lead, and invest in solutions that build stronger communities.

www.centralvalleycf.org

MEET THE TEAM

GRETCHEN MOORE
Director of Strategic Partnerships

LAURA MACIEL
Communications Manager

LAURA RAMOS
Community Engagement Associate
Mark your calendars

**Important dates**

- **April 23rd**: Applications open
- **June 19th**: Applications close
- **June 19th**: Winners announced at CVCF celebrates
- **July 21st**: Meet & greet with Sascha Rice
- **October 14th**: Final films due
- **October 23rd**: The Big Tell showcase

**Mark your calendars**

**Important dates**
6. TIPS

Application Tips

We want you to be fully equipped with the knowledge to submit your best application:

• **DO** submit a separate application for each film idea (yes, you can submit more than one!)

• **DO** fill out all of the fields in the application

• **DO** have your film concept very well thought through – storyline, timeline, interviews, licensing should all be addressed in your application

• **DO** remember that this is a documentary film contest. We are looking for nonfiction films presenting actual, factual information – works of fiction or propaganda will not be selected

• **DON’T** propose a film idea that is similar to one we’ve done in the past

• **DON’T** wait until the last minute to submit your application

• **DON’T** worry if you need equipment or resources – a membership with our friends at Community Media Access Collaborative (CMAC) can help you out.

• **DON’T** hesitate to ask questions. Our staff is here to help: Laura Ramos at ramos@centralvalleycf.org
Remember...

We are looking for UNDISCOVERED stories. There are plenty of great things happening in our Valley, but we’re looking for the stories that haven’t been told yet. For example, if your story concept has already received news coverage, it is not undiscovered and unlikely to be chosen for The Big Tell. However, we would be more likely to fund that story if you found a different angle, or some part of the story that wasn’t covered.

Also, take a moment to look through previous years’ films. We are unlikely to fund a film idea that was the subject of a film we already funded.
FAQ

What is The Big Tell?

The Big Tell is a regional filmmaking contest offering grants of $5,000 each to ten filmmakers to produce 5-minute mini-documentaries that feature stories of California’s six-county Central Valley. Now in its fourth year, The Big Tell is coordinated by Central Valley Community Foundation (CVCF), an organization committed to raising the profile of California’s Central Valley.

Who can enter?

Professional, amateur, or student filmmakers working on their own, or on behalf of a community benefit organization or nonprofit. We support all filmmakers from various and diverse backgrounds. Women, people of color, amateurs, students, emerging filmmakers, and people from or living in the Central Valley are encouraged to apply.

Can past applicants and grantees/ filmmakers apply?

Yes. All past applicants and grantees/ filmmakers are eligible to apply.

Is there a fee to apply?

No. Applications can be found at www.TheBigTell.org, and are due by midnight on Friday, June 19, 2020.
Can I use a film that I already made?

This grant is for the production of new, non-fiction material. We will not accept completed films or work that has been publicly viewed. You may use footage that you already have on hand, but the film must have been completed in 2020.

What kind of films are you looking for?

Films will be authentic, original, non-fiction, mini documentaries, not less than four minutes and not more than five minutes in length, including opening and credits. The stylistic or artistic approach and techniques are at the discretion of the filmmaker.

Applicants are strongly advised to look at films from previous years. If your idea is similar to a film from a previous year, it is unlikely to be selected. Films can be found at www.TheBigTell.org or on Central Valley Community Foundation’s YouTube and Vimeo pages.

Do I have to live in the Central Valley?

No. But your story must be about a person, place, or activity in at least one of the counties in CVCF’s service area (Merced, Mariposa, Madera, Fresno, Tulare, and Kings counties). Extra consideration will be given to filmmakers that live in or have a direct connection to the Central Valley.
FAQ

1. The Story: Is this story original in theme, idea, or storytelling technique? Does the film idea have a clear structure, plot, and story arc? Is the story original and engaging?

2. Filmmaker: Whether novice or professional, will this filmmaker create a compelling film (based on samples of previous work, experience and/or promise)?

3. Diversity: Does this application contribute to our goal of diversity among filmmakers, storylines, and geographical focus?

4. Other/Subjective: What do you find, compelling, interesting, or unique about this application, above and beyond the other scoring criteria? Is this a film you want to see? How does this film relate to the other nine finalists.

Keep in mind that we receive over 75 applications each year and can only accept ten. Every year, we turn away incredible film concepts that score high on those four criteria because we can only fund ten films.

What are the timelines/deadlines?

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>April 23</td>
<td>Applications open</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 19</td>
<td>Applications due at midnight. Includes application and story concept via storyboard, 30-second concept video, draft narrative, script, or outline</td>
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FAQ

July 9  Winners announced at “CVCF Celebrates” event at Shinzen Gardens 6:00pm

July 21  Meet & Greet for filmmakers, CVCF staff, and Sascha Rice

TBD*  One-on-one mentoring with Sascha Rice

August 15  Rough cuts due to Sascha Rice

September 30  Final Cut Preview at Tower Theatre to see how your film plays on the big screen

October 14  Final films due to CVCF by 5:00 pm. Films must be 1080p Resolution, 16:9 Ratio.

October 23  The Big Tell Showcase at Fresno’s Tower Theatre: 6:00 VIP party & red carpet; 7:00 premiere; 8:30 filmmaker Q&A

*Dates and requirements subject to change and may be variable depending on the COVID-19 crisis

Filmmakers and their teams/partners will participate in one-on-one mentoring sessions (1 in person on 7/21, and at least 1 via phone/Skype) with Emmy-nominated documentarian Sascha Rice. Those dates will be determined between the filmmaker and Ms. Rice. The phone/Skype sessions will require filmmakers to provide a rough cut in advance of the call.

Filmmakers are required to submit films at all required due dates (above), and someone from the team must attend the Final Cut Preview on September 30 at Tower Theatre. Final films must be 1080p Resolution, 16:9 Ratio.
12. FAQ

Who can apply: Teams, companies, individuals, nonprofits, filmmakers?

All of the above. Because this is a grant, you must be a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization or have one as your fiscal agent to receive the funds. If you do not have a fiscal agent, you may use CMAC at no cost.

Although films are often collaborative, we will only recognize one individual as the filmmaker of record. Only the applicant listed as the point of contact on the application will be recognized in marketing publications. At the Showcase, only that filmmaker will appear on stage for the Q&A, and will have his/her name listed on the program and Showcase posters. On the film credits, however, you may list all members of your team.

Women, people of color, people who identify as minority or underrepresented groups are strongly encouraged to apply.

How do I apply?

Applications can be found on the CVCF website at www.TheBigTell.org and are due by midnight on Friday, June 19, 2020.

For more information or answers to any questions, please contact Laura Ramos at ramos@centralvalleycf.org.

I’m not a filmmaker but I have a story to tell

You can work with a filmmaker to produce your story. You will need to solidify that partnership before applying since the application asks for information about the filmmaker’s experience. Grant funds can be used to pay the filmmaker you select.
Please note that there are no additional funds to cover added expenses, and that agreement is between you and your filmmaker, not CVCF.

If you’re interested in becoming a filmmaker, this is a great time to join CMAC and receive the training and tools you need to share your story!

If you don’t have a filmmaker in mind, CVCF staff can provide connections to local filmmakers who may be interested in producing your work (see next question).

I’m a filmmaker and am looking for stories to tell

Contact CVCF staff as we may have applicants who are looking for filmmakers to tell their stories (see previous question).

Do I have to have my own equipment?

No. Community Media Access Collaborative (CMAC) in downtown Fresno offers access to training and tools including production studio, private editing suites, meeting rooms, classroom space, and a computer lab, along with a variety of portable production gear. Note: CMAC requires a $50 membership fee for individuals and organizations (for 1 person or $100 for 3 people) or a $25 fee for students to access training and equipment. Some equipment requires completion of training before use. This fee is incurred at the grantee’s expense. Please visit www.cmactv.com to learn more about available resources. Partnership with CMAC is not required for participation in The Big Tell, but is encouraged for filmmakers who can benefit from it.
What about rights, ownership, and permissions?

The film becomes shared property between the filmmaker and CVCF, and cannot have prior ownership. Additionally, your project cannot be publicly available or viewed publicly or commercially before the The Big Tell Showcase on October 23, 2020. CVCF reserves the right to unlimited and non-exclusive broadcast or sharing of your film for purposes that include but are not limited to marketing, promotions, fundraising, or coalition-building. Filmmakers will sign a contract with CVCF that further outlines the terms of the agreement.

Filmmakers assume liability for the mini documentary’s content and are expected to take all steps necessary to secure proper permissions for copyright, as well as location and talent releases and permits.

How will the winning mini-documentaries be presented to the public?

On October 23, 2020, CVCF is hosting a screening of all 10 films at the Tower Theatre in Fresno. Films will be shown in succession, and filmmakers will participate as a cohort in a 30-minute moderated Q&A after the films are screened. Remember, films can not be publicly screened prior to this event. After the event, filmmakers are welcome to share their films as they see fit.

What is required of a winning applicant?

Winning applicants are required to:

• Attend the July 21 meet & greet with Sascha Rice at 6:00 pm at CVCF’s office in Fresno
• Participate in a minimum of two digital (phone or Skype) mentorship sessions with Sascha Rice, and submit rough cuts as directed; dates will be agreed upon by the filmmaker and Ms. Rice

• Submit a rough cut to Sascha Rice by **August 25**

• Attend the Final Cut Preview at Tower Theatre on **September 30** to ensure that your film displays/plays properly on the big screen

• Submit final film to CVCF by 5:00 pm on **October 14, 2020**

• Participate in the **October 23** The Big Tell Showcase at the Tower Theatre in Fresno including 6:00 VIP party, 7:00 film screening, and 8:30 filmmaker Q&A

Additionally, filmmakers will be invited to participate in the winner announcement (**July 9** at Shinzen Gardens in Fresno's Woodward Park at 6:00 pm if social distancing requirements allow), and various yet-to-be-determined media and publicity opportunities (for example, guest appearances on local TV or radio to promote the **10/23 Showcase**).

The Showcase event is free and open to the public. It includes a red carpet walk under the marquee. Filmmakers and their guests are invited to attend and will receive reserved seating.

**Other important requirements?**

Failure to submit a completed film by 5:00 pm on **October 14, 2020** will result in forfeiture of grant funds and the applicant will be expected to return the full $5,000 to Central Valley Community Foundation. No exceptions.
FAQ

When do I get the money and what can I use it for?

Funds will be made within one month of contract signing. This is partially dependent on how quickly filmmakers return their signed contracts and supporting documents.

There is no restriction on the use of the funds, but be advised that no additional funds will be administered for any reason. You will sign a contract with CVCF that details funding information. Funds can only be disbursed from CVCF to a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization. If the applicant (that’s you!) is not a nonprofit organization, and is not affiliated with an organization that can accept the grant on their behalf, the applicant can use CMAC as their fiscal agent at no fee. A check will be cut from CVCF to CMAC, and then CMAC will cut a check to you for the full amount of $5,000. Note that this may delay the time it takes for you to receive the check. You may use any eligible nonprofit to be your fiscal agent, however the terms of that agreement and any fee charged by that nonprofit to process your check is entirely between you and your nonprofit partner.

Failure to participate in mentorship activities, or public events can result in similar sanctions, at the discretion of Central Valley Community Foundation.

Failure to adhere to the film’s time limit (not less than four minutes and not more than five minutes), can result in forfeiture of grant funds and your film will not be screened at the Showcase. It’s a hard stop at 5 minutes, including title card and credits. Five minutes. Not 5:01. Not 5:05. Five minutes. Absolutely no exceptions!

We require that all films recognize CVCF and other sponsors in the credits, and recognize Sascha Rice as “Consulting Producer” on official credits (e.g. IMDB). Guidelines for credit recognition will be provided to the ten finalists.
For more information...

Applications
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Project Management
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Technical Assistance
Laura Maciel - laura@centralvalleycf.org