**THE NONFICTION CORE APPLICATION
PROPOSAL CHECKLIST w/ INTEGRATED
GENERATIVE AI QUESTIONS (updated V 3.1)**

Note to funders:
- *Organizations may choose the questions below that are relevant to their specific funding initiative. **You do not have to use all the Core Application questions if they are not relevant to your funding or artist support**.*
- *Funders may divide the Core Application questions to fit their application timelines and processes. For example, a funder may ask for the logline, artist biography, and project stage in a letter of intent (LOI) and include additional questions in their second round.*
- *Questions should be used as written. Please do not rewrite or modify the text of the questions.*
- *If the Generative AI questions are not relevant for your program, please use Core Application 3.0, which does not include Generative AI-related questions.*
- ***Funders may add additional questions that are relevant to their applications or make questions optional.***
- *We recommend funders offer applicants who are unable to submit a written application an alternative submission method (e.g., a video or audio application). Funders should clearly indicate how an applicant should proceed to request an alternative submission method. We suggest providing an email address and a phone number for this process. For example, please contact Jane Doe at janedoe@funder.org or 123-456-7890 to initiate your application process.*
- *Not all submission platforms accept # of words to determine length limits. To translate word count to character count, we suggest the following:*
    - *100 words = 650 characters*

Note to applicants:
- *We suggest that your total word count for the entire application be approximately no more than 4,250 words, especially if using the optional Generative AI questions. Responses are not penalized for coming in under the maximum word count, so long as they address the questions posed.*

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Logline
Please provide a 2-3 sentence summary of the project that captures the most important elements — setting, participants*, key issues, and form.

Topic Summary (250 - 750 words)
Explain the topic, theme, context, stakes, relevance, or questions that you're exploring in your project.

Film Summary (250 - 750 words)
Give an overview introducing the main participants and plot points in the film. If your project is non-narrative or not character-driven, what is your concept, and how is it constructed? Please be clear about the elements of your story that remain unknown or unclear and highlight the questions that may steer its direction.

Artistic Approach (250- 750 words)
Describe your artistic vision for your project. What are the formal elements of the project, including any artistic devices, visual, and audio elements? Does this project fit within or reference any specific filmmaking or narrative traditions?

If you plan to use generative AI to realize any part of your artistic vision, describe how. *For guidance, reference the [AI Addendum](#) and [APA Guidelines.](#)*

Filmmaker(s) Statement(s) (125 - 250 words per statement)
to be completed by Director(s) and/or Producer(s)
Explain who you are as a filmmaker, and if applicable, how this project is expanding or evolving your creative practice. What does success look like for you as an artist? What are the creative, professional, or holistic barriers and challenges you are facing?

Connection and Point of View (125 - 250 words)
What is your connection to the story (i.e., to the participants, themes, community, location, archives, etc.)? How do your interests, motivations, and/or worldview shape your approach to this story? What lens, perspective, insights, or bias do you bring to the story?

Accountability and Community Care (125 - 250 words)
Describe your ethical considerations and practices of accountability in your filmmaking process. This can include a description of your guiding values, processes of establishing and maintaining ongoing consent, providing transparency about your filmmaking processes, collecting feedback etc. For example: How do you reflect on and address the potential consequences of your storytelling choices on participants, audiences, your crew, and/or other stakeholders? What activities or strategies do you use to implement your values as they relate to care for yourself and others?

If you are using generative AI, describe what ethical considerations or practices of accountability you are employing. [This can include workflow/tracking/legal review of AI-generated materials; transparency with your participants (if applicable), assessing algorithmic bias; consideration of possible impact on the historical record; copyright issues; and assessment of the AI tools or technologies you are choosing].

For further guidance, reference DAWG's Framework for Values, Ethics and Accountability in Nonfiction Filmmaking. If using GenAI, please reference the APA Guidelines and AI Addendum.

Safety and Security (50-100 words)
If relevant, please reflect on any known safety and security concerns throughout the lifecycle of your project — from development through distribution. How will you mitigate risks (digital, physical, legal, etc.) to your participants and crew? *For further guidance, reference the Safe and Secure Handbook.*

Accessibility (50 - 100 words)
If applicable, how do you intend to make your film and/or production accessible to D/deaf, blind/low vision, disabled, and neurodiverse crew, participants, and audiences? *Please ensure that these accessibility costs (captions, audio descriptions, transcripts) are reflected in the submitted budget. For further guidance, reference the FWD-Doc Toolkit and the FWD-Doc Engagement Pack.*

Audience Consideration (50 - 100 words)
Describe the audiences you would like your film to reach and why. How do you plan to reach and engage them?

If you are using generative AI as part of your artistic approach, how do you plan to disclose it to your audience? If you don't plan to disclose the use of AI, please explain why.

Intended Impact (50 - 100 words)
Describe your vision for the influence the film will have. If relevant, what are the impact goals and strategies for your project? *For further guidance, reference The Impact Field Guide.*

Key Creative Personnel (50 - 100 words per bio)
Provide brief biographies for each key creative team member. Include information about relevant expertise and the individual's role in the project. Bullet-list names and titles of any confirmed advisors who are attached.

Creative Control
In one or two sentences, please describe who has creative control and legal ownership of the project.
Project Stage and Timeline (50 - 100 words)
In list form, outline the projected production timeline from the development of the project to the anticipated completion date. Please include major project activities, production schedules, and anticipated post-production and release dates.

Financial Information (50 - 100 words each)

Fundraising Strategy
Describe the overall fundraising strategy and who from the team will lead these efforts for the film.

Grant Impact
Should you receive a grant, describe how any granted funds would be spent and how the funds would help you move forward with your project.

Funding Detail
List all sources of funding and amounts. Include types of funding (i.e. government, foundations, pre-sales, private sources, other) and status (to apply, applied, and confirmed).

Funding Source	Amount	Status
ex. Lovely Film Club [Foundation]	$20,000	to apply

Comprehensive Line-Item Expense Budget
Please provide a budget, from development through release, in U.S. dollars, including a budget total. Please ensure that any accessibility, safety, generative AI, and duty of care costs mentioned in your above responses are reflected in the submitted budget. *For further guidance, reference A (Revised!) Introduction to Documentary Budgeting.*

Visual Samples
Please provide links and passwords for both samples in your written proposal. Links and passwords should be valid for up to eight months from the date of your submission.

Captions or English Subtitles are required for the Current Work Sample and highly recommended for the Director's Prior Work sample. *For further guidance on creating captions, reference FWD-Doc Practices & Resources We Recommend as well as the NAI Captioning and Audio Description Resources.*

Director's Prior Work (50-100 words)
We encourage applicants to include a link to a previous work (any length or genre) by the director. Emerging filmmakers with no previous directing experience may also apply without a previous directing sample or may provide a past work sample from another creative team member if attached (producer, cinematographer, editor, etc).

Discuss the relevance of the work to the current project. If the current project is a departure from the previous work, how will this film differ?

Current Sample/Rough Cut (125 - 250 words)
What should reviewers be looking for in your sample? Explain what is present and absent in the sample, and how it will differ as a finished film. Describe how it is representative of the intended story, style, subject, or other aspect of the project. If your sample includes any audio, visual, or text elements generated with AI, please describe how and what tools or

technologies you used. We encourage applicants not to spend extra resources creating a sample for each individual fund. If your current sample is outside of the suggested length requirements, please provide reviewers with the time codes of the portion of the sample that best reflects your intended style and approach (e.g., 3:15-12:15).

- Development applicants are encouraged (but not required) to include visual material such as scene selects, teasers, pitch decks, or other edited footage (up to 15 minutes).

- Production applicants are encouraged to submit a sample between 10 to 20 minutes. The sample should demonstrate your access to characters, visual treatment, and the developing tone and style. We encourage applicants to submit a complete scene that provides the viewer insight into the team's ability to communicate their intention.

- Post-production applications require a sample of between 10-20 minutes that demonstrates access to characters, story arc or concept, and visual treatment. If available, a rough cut may be submitted. However, please refer to each organization's maximum length requirements.

Participants is used throughout this document, but depending on the specifics of your project you may want to refer to your participants as characters/contributors/subjects/protagonists etc.

AI Addendum for the Nonfiction Core Application
AO June 2025

The AI Addendum is intended as an introductory resource for nonfiction filmmakers who are curious about, currently using, or planning to use generative AI (GenAI) in the creation of their films. We begin with a brief glossary of selected **Key Terms** to help establish a shared vocabulary around GenAI in this context. Next, we offer a range of examples under the heading **Articles about Notable Nonfiction Films Using GenAI.** These samples aim to illustrate how GenAI usage in documentaries can be described, offering reference points for your own Core App 3.1 writing. We also include practical resources to reference under the section called **Resources for Using GenAI in Nonfiction Production**. Finally, we include a **Further Reading** section that gathers broader materials at the intersection of GenAI and nonfiction storytelling. This list is just a starting point. As this rapidly evolving field continues to grow, we are committed to expanding the resource to reflect new insights and practices.

Nonfiction filmmakers should feel empowered to take creative risks and explore new tools. At the same time, we recognize the responsibility that comes with making a film —and shaping the truth for an audience.

The AI Addendum was compiled by representatives of the International Documentary Association, Sundance Institute, Archival Producers Alliance, and Google's Artists + Machine Intelligence program, with consultation from stakeholders in the field.

AI Addendum Resources Webpage includes:
- Key Terms
- Articles about Notable Nonfiction Films Using GenAI
- Resources for Using GenAI in Nonfiction Production
- Further Reading List