



SAN LUIS OBISPO
INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL

November 5, 2024

Dear San Luis Obispo Tourism Board,

This year the SLO Film Festival celebrates its 31st annual festival where it will continue to be an exciting community and cultural event. After celebrating our 30th anniversary in 2024, we received two 2025 prestigious honors. We are now distinguished as an Academy Award® Qualifying Festival for Documentary Short Films and have been named one of the Top 25 Coolest Film Festivals worldwide by MovieMaker Magazine. With this renewed spirit for showcasing the best, most relevant and fresh independent films of the year, the upcoming 2025 SLO Film Fest is shaping up to be an outstanding event. We believe these new accolades will create further exposure for the festival and increase its legitimacy within the industry at large.

As the SLO Film Fest steadily expands its reach within our community and solidifies its place as a premiere regional destination event, each year we ask how we can grow and improve. Our ultimate goal is to continuously offer an elevated experience to our attendees and filmmakers as we work to position San Luis Obispo county as a thriving hub for arts and culture between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Storytelling is the foundation of what we do. Our festival offers a unique and inclusive platform for filmmakers, tourists, local attendees, and businesses alike to all connect with one another. Through our platform, not only can we uplift the many voices of our community, but we also grant access to new perspectives to our audiences that they may have otherwise never discovered through our international film programming, thus ushering in a broader collective voice within our community. It's a powerful platform that we don't take for granted.

A marker of a healthy community is a thriving arts and culture and our organization is committed to playing a larger role in supporting that. In July 2024, we took over the operations of the Palm Theatre, establishing it as the SLO Film Center. By offering programming throughout the year outside of our annual festival, we aim to create more opportunities for

collaboration and partnerships in local hospitality, tourism, and the expansive wine industry in the area. With the goal to bring more opportunities for tourists and residents alike to engage with the transformative power of film, we'll be supporting the cultural and economic growth within the area.

The 31st annual SLO Film Festival will take place over six days and will include independent films from various categories presented at our participating venues exclusively in downtown San Luis Obispo. In addition to showcasing insightful movies and collaborating with other organizations and industries in our community, we plan to offer added networking and educational opportunities through more panels, workshops, mixers and filmmaker Q&As, along with hosting exciting film competitions throughout the year.

We aim to attract visitors from outside our immediate area for our annual event and throughout the year as we continue to grow our new venture as the SLO Film Center with daily screenings, quarterly events and an expanding event calendar. In targeting Los Angeles, San Francisco and other cities with direct flights to SLO, we aim to expand our reach and encourage more visitation to our area to attend our festival and stay for local activities and wine tasting.

Similarly to our partnership last year we plan to offer the TBID an exclusive pass that will incentivize visitors to "See+Stay" in San Luis Obispo. Through a more direct marketing approach, we aim to create a destination experience for visiting guests and introduce them to all that our county has to offer. The goal is to increase tourism, support our hotel partners and contribute to local economic growth.

This initiative will be cross-promoted through participating partners via social and email campaigns, advertised through traditional marketing initiatives and made available through various online portals. Our hotel package initiative will be available through the VisitSLO website and advertised on our website as well.

It is our goal to provide all festival attendees a thoughtful experience that encourages them to return year after year as we showcase the very best of what our county has to offer. Our festival lounge is the perfect place for attendees, filmmakers, sponsors, and media to engage with participating local businesses and networks. Our relationship with our area is top of mind within this overarching goal, as we hope to grow and expand our relationship this year and years forward. Your generous support would directly benefit the economic recovery of the local businesses we plan to partner with by aiding us in providing our community with an experience that unites and empowers us through the power of film.

Much like years past, we plan to survey our attendees in order to obtain useful data and feedback about our audience. This allows us to measure our marketing outreach. Last year we had over 8,000 attendees with a steady increase each year. Folks that surveyed were asked how they heard about the festival, their demographics, residence information, and where they were lodging if not from the area. This offers us insight on our lodging impact where we've determined that our visitors stay an average of 2.5 nights, which we hope to increase this year with more marketing assistance.

We hope these initiatives will offer you and others a deeper connection to everything we strive to do as the region's main resource for independent cinema and education. We couldn't succeed without you and are most grateful for your past generosity. We hope that you will help us continue our vital mission.

Sincerely,

Skye McLennan
Executive Director of SLO Film Festival



SAN LUIS OBISPO
INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL

EVENT NAME: SAN LUIS OBISPO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (SLO FILM FESTIVAL)

EVENT DATES: April 24 - 29th, 2025 in downtown San Luis Obispo

EVENT VENUE LOCATION: Exclusively Downtown San Luis Obispo, Fremont, The Palm and Downtown Centre Cinemas

WEBSITE: www.slofilmfest.org

EVENT ORGANIZATION: SAN LUIS OBISPO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, LLC

NON-PROFIT: YES

ORGANIZATION URL: www.slofilmfest.org

PHONE NUMBER: 805-546-3456

POINT OF CONTACT: Skye McLennan

EMAIL: skye@slofilmfest.org

FESTIVAL NEEDS:

- **\$15,000 to support filmmaker, journalist and industry professionals lodging during the Festival at SLO partner hotels, specifically on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights.** We are looking for at least 150 hotel nights (please note this number may change depending on filmmaker, journalist and industry professional attendance.) We currently have 50 complimentary nights donated with various hotel partners around the county. This concept would act similarly to that of the Cal Poly Athletic program. Hoteliers would opt in to participate and be reimbursed for the nights using this funding.

- **\$10,000 to support getting the Variety marketing package.**
 - Variety would be our lead media partner
 - The package includes a curtain raiser on the festival in the issue leading up to the festival
 - Variety editor would attend and present the award and moderate a conversation for our celebrity awardee.
 - Variety would have the video conversation and recap on Variety.com.
 - Package includes a full page ad in Variety magazine that can be used to promote VisitSLO. Having Variety as a media partner would help secure talent, legitimacy and exposure of the festival

Examples:

30k packages samples:

[Recap Deck SCAD](#)

[Sun Valley Film Festival to Spotlight Variety's 10 Producers Announcement](#)

[Recap: At the Sun Valley Film Festival, Variety's 2023 Producers to Watch](#)

[10 Artisans at SCAD Panel Convo](#)

[Rian Johnson and Editor Bob Ducsay to Receive Variety's Creative Collaborators Award at Middleburg Film Festival](#)

[Sofia Coppola and Costume Designer Stacey Battat to Receive Variety's Creative Collaborators Award at Middleburg Film Festival](#)

15k/10k package samples:

[Geena Davis Reflects on Bentonville Film Festival's Legacy Amid 10th Anniversary: 'It Really Has Surpassed Our Expectations'](#)

- **Marketing support and paid media** based on a strategic campaign outlined by Noble Studios and projected at a \$6,750 budget.
- **See + Stay Package**, similar to last year but with a few extra perks! To qualify you must book a minimum of two nights at any hotel in San Luis Obispo and will receive two "See + Stay" passes that each include four regular screening tickets, access to special events, and access to our festival lounge. This year we are not asking the TBID to reimburse us for the value of the tickets, but would appreciate help promoting the package.

EVENT DESCRIPTION

The San Luis Obispo International Film Festival is a non-profit organization centered around celebrating independent films and filmmakers. With a six-day highly regarded annual event, a week-long virtual festival, and other exciting events and screenings throughout the year, the SLO Film Festival is a pillar of the arts in our community, and provides a year-round destination for international independent cinema promoting diversity, understanding, education, and inclusion through engaging storytelling to an ever-expanding range of audiences to new ideas and experiences. Exciting, fun, and impactful the SLO Film Festival screens over 100 films throughout the week, hosts a VIP Festival Lounge, Red Carpet events, live music, educational conversations with filmmakers and industry leaders, and capstone events each night to bring the community together, celebrate the arts, and expose our audience to important topics around the world.

DESCRIBE HOW YOU TRACK YOUR EVENT, SUCCESS AND ATTENDEES

(Ticket Sales, event attendance, attendee demographics, event satisfaction results, etc.)

Our organization utilizes a few different metrics and platforms to measure and track success. Our ticketing database allows us to track ticket and pass sales and redemption uses. It captures our audiences' residences, gives insight on their interests, if they are a returning customer and also measures which events are most successful. We also circulate surveys to attendees throughout and after the festival that help us retrieve feedback about the event as well as demographic information, where out of town attendees are lodging, the length of their stay, if they've traveled to the area before, etc.

DESCRIBE YOUR TARGET AUDIENCES

Our festival has two branches it must market to: the audience and the filmmakers. From there we can break down our key target audiences. Historically (before Covid), festival attendees have primarily been highly educated, 50+ year olds, with a salary range between \$75k - \$300k. Since Covid, while continuing to attract this same demographic, we have begun to engage and grow an audience that skews younger between 25-34 as well as 35-44 also making between 50k to 300k. We anticipate this demographic to grow with us year after year as we focus on strategically targeting folks with interests in the arts, travel, food and wine, in both Los Angeles and San Francisco, as well as in areas that have direct flights to the area such as Dallas, Phoenix, and Seattle.

HISTORICAL EVENT ATTENDANCE

Between 2020-2022 we had between 5,000 to 15,000 in-person admissions per year with an additional 8,000-16,000 virtual viewers. For 2024 we had 7,189 in-person and 1,560 virtual admissions. Folks that surveyed were asked how they heard about the festival, their demographic information, and if they are from outside SLO County they were asked where they are from and where they were staying. This offers us insight on our lodging impact, where

we've determined that visitors stay an average of 2.5 nights which we hope to increase this year with more marketing assistance.

HISTORICAL PERCENTAGE OF IN-COUNTY VS OUT-OF-AREA EVENT ATTENDEES

- **75%** - Local / In-County Event Attendees
- **25%** - Out-of-Area Event Attendees (Resides 50+ miles outside of SLO)

EXPECTED TOTAL NUMBER OF EVENT ATTENDANCE

For 2025 we are expecting to return to between 8,000 to 10,000 in person attendees

IN-PERSON FILMMAKER ATTENDANCE

- 161 total films shown across 151 screenings and events
- We had special guests and filmmakers in attendance from 67 main competition films, bringing in over 192 guests from the filmmaking teams to San Luis Obispo, with an average stay of 2.75 nights. This data is not including any family or partners that came with them - strictly the reported filmmaking team personnel in attendance.

RESULTS OF TBID SUPPORT:

VIPS: \$12,091.17 was used to help support filmmakers and journalists attending the festival (\$10,000 reimbursed through TBID funding). Using these funds, these guests were booked at The Best Western, Hotel Buena Vista, Hampton Inn and La Quinta Inn and Suites based on the lowest offered rates available.

Total Rooms Booked for the Festival: 138

Rooms Donated: 75 (\$30,675 Donation Value / \$409 average rate)

Rooms Booked Through TBID Funding: 63 (\$12,091 Spend / \$191 average rate)

- Hotel Buena Vista: 19 room nights
- La Quinta Inn: 16 room nights
- Best Western: 13 room nights
- Hampton Inn: 15 room nights

SEE + STAY PACKAGE: 17 qualified stays
\$14,003.90 hotel revenue, average 2-3 nights

LESSONS LEARNED:

- Toolkit for hotels to easily use on their website about the See + Stay package
- More promotion earlier on through SLO Film Festival and Visit SLO
- Reduce clicking and easier access to booking hotel
- Ease of use of the pass and how to pickup/use

PROVIDE INFORMATION ON EVENT TICKETING

We use the ticketing platform Eventive. Eventive attendees are able to purchase passes, packages and individual tickets in advance or through our Box Office if more help is required. Eventive allows us to scan (passes and tickets, each attached to a customer profile) and track the attendance and attendees of each event. The following is a breakdown of our available passes and tickets for our annual film festival event.

PASSES + TICKETS

- **MOGUL+ ALL ACCESS PASS (\$350 Value)** Grants one person access to all in-person screenings, special events, festival lounge, and encore screenings. Plus, in-person priority line access.
- **MOVIE STAR+ PASS (\$225 Value)** Grants one person access to all in-person screenings. Includes daytime access to the festival lounge. Does NOT include access to special events such as Surf nite, King Vidor, Opening and Closing night. Also includes priority line access at in-person screenings.
- **FAN PACK 6 (\$80 Value)** A ticket package of six individual general admission tickets for in-person and virtual regular screenings. Does NOT grant access to special screenings, special events, red carpet events, or priority line access. Brings each ticket down from \$15 to \$12.
- **RED CARPET EVENT TICKET (\$25 Value)** Grants one person attendance to one Red Carpet Event or Special Presentation Screening
- **ADMIT ONE GENERAL ADMISSION TICKET (\$15 Value)** General admission tickets for in-person and virtual regular screenings. Does NOT grant access to special screenings, special events, red carpet events, or priority line access.

HAVE YOU REQUESTED FUNDING FROM OTHER ORGANIZATIONS/ENTITIES?

Yes

PLEASE PROVIDE THE NAMES OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS AND FUNDING ENTITIES:

Yes. We receive funding and in-kind support from the County Board of Supervisors, City of San Luis Obispo, The Community Foundation and Visit SLOCal.