

# 50 Film Festivals Worth the Entry Fee 2025

BY TIM MOLLOY · | UPDATED: JUNE 4, 2025



Almost everything in film is subjective, but with our annual list of 50 Film Festivals Worth the Entry Fee, we try to be as objective as can be.

It is largely about numbers: How many submissions does a festival receive? How much money, if any, does the festival pay in travel costs? How much does it offer in prizes? How many distributors, other industry representatives, and news outlets attend?

It's also about specifics: Who are those distributors? Is the festival Oscar qualifying? Does it offer a screenwriting competition? Great panels? Interesting guests? Rides to the airport? Food?

We're especially interested in ratios: We think a moviemaker's best ROI will be found at a high-quality festival with an inviting submission-to-acceptance ratio, where you'll have a good chance of getting in and meeting people who can help you — not at a loud party, screaming over a VIP rope line you're not allowed to cross, but in pleasant settings where you can enjoy real human moments.

So we love hidden gems, and festivals that not only look great on paper, but show heart in person.



Each year, we prepare our list of 50 Film Festivals Worth the Entry Fee through questionnaires submitted by festivals, fact-checking with filmmakers who attend them, and, as often as possible, our own visits. We don't bother including the biggest festivals on this list, because if you're savvy enough to read *MovieMaker*, you're probably also familiar with Berlinale, Cannes, Sundance, SXSW, Toronto, Tribeca and Venice.

We've also skipped a number of very prestigious festivals that receive so many submissions — and accept so few — that they're real longshots. As always, festivals that are Academy Awards qualifying in at least one category have an "A" next to their name, and those with screenwriting competitions have an "S." And like we always say, not every festival on this list will be perfect for everyone, but we're sure at least one will be perfect for you.

So with that, here's our list of...

## 50 Film Festivals Worth the Entry Fee 2025

### NEWFILMMAKERS LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles, California / Monthly / [newfilmmakersla.com](https://newfilmmakersla.com)

We can promise that filmmakers will get media coverage from this festival — because we're among the outlets that provide it. Every month we feature interviews with NFMLA filmmakers on [moviemaker.com](https://moviemaker.com), where they go in-depth on their inspirations and approaches to storytelling. Unlike the other festivals on this list, NFMLA holds events monthly, often focusing on a different slate of underrepresented filmmakers. Examples include the InFocus: Middle Eastern & Arab Cinema Program, InFocus: Indigenous Cinema, and Indigenous: Veteran Cinema Program. Co-founder and executive director Larry Laboe makes everyone know they're appreciated and welcomed, and the joys of playing NFMLA include screening at a 500-seat theater, pre- and post-screening receptions, and industry meetings for those whose films are official selections. Distributors known to attend include A24, Amazon, Kino Lorber, Lionsgate, NBCUniversal, Netflix, Warner Bros. Discovery, 20th Century Studios, Max, Paramount and more.