



CANNES

Watch Industry Leaders Break Down California's Film Tax Incentives at The American Pavilion

IndieWire's Chris O'Falt led a conversation on the state's tax incentives to encourage productions at The American Pavilion's California Day event.

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On May 13, IndieWire and [American Pavilion](#) teamed up for the second [California Day event](#) at the [Cannes Film Festival](#), a day dedicated to exploring the world of film production in California. The day consisted of several panel conversations including “Made in California: Incentives, Financing, and Independent Film.” IndieWire VP, features strategy Chris O’Falt spoke to film industry leaders on the tax incentives California offers and how best to take advantage of them.

Panelists included New Filmmakers Los Angeles co-founder and executive director Larry Laboe, California Film Commission director Colleen Bell, and Film SF executive director and FLIX board member Manijeh Fata. The three spoke about what their organizations offer to filmmakers, and what role they serve in helping to finance independent filmmaking.

Bell, speaking about the newest film and TV tax credit program issued by California, said one of the main issues she faced while spearheading the program was getting legislators representing places without robust film production to support the incentive.

“We continued to shift that narrative. This is a jobs program. It’s highly targeted and focused. It’s put into place to create as many jobs, sustain as many jobs, and generate as much economic activity as possible,” Bell said. “We’re a different kind of program than a program like Georgia, which is just uncapped and rolling, and you apply, and you get in. Ours is a very important economic development tool.”

In February, Mayor Daniel Lurie of San Francisco introduced a new tax program in the city to streamline film production. Fata spoke about the new initiative, a million-dollar tax rebate for movies and shows that shoot in the city.

“It’s huge for us because you can stack this with the state tax credit,” Fata said. “You have to shoot at least, and we’d shift the qualifications so that we can capture projects that want to, shoot at least five days of principal photography. So we lower the threshold so we can capture projects that, um, want to come maybe for a shorter period of time, but are not, not just coming for the beauty shots of one or two days.”

Discussing some of the priorities for independent film and what’s funded, Laboe noted that it’s important to keep the international community in mind. The goal is for Los Angeles to be a hotbed of filmmaking collaboration between nations.

“We wanna celebrate international voices. We wanna be rooted in the international community,” Laboe said. “I think making sure that we’re also in California, saying, ‘How do we work globally?’ How do we make sure that our partners in Italy know that we want to work with them, that our partners in Canada know that we wanna work with them, and that we wanna find ways to do it that benefit everybody in the ecosystem, is really key.”

Watch the complete [video](#) of the “Made in California: Incentives, Financing, and Independent Film” panel in the video above. For our complete programming schedule at The American Pavilion, click [here](#).

[California Day](#) 2026 at The American Pavilion is presented by California Film Commission, Chula Vista Entertainment Company, Inc., Film Liaisons in California Statewide (FLICS), Film Santa Monica, Marina Del Rey Los Angeles, and NewFilmmakers Los Angeles.