

Film Industry Regional Expansion (FIRE) Phase 2 - Economic Impact Study

Pilot Project Grant Program

Film Society of Northwestern Pennsylvania

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Application Form

Eligibility

Qualifiers*

All must apply in order to be eligible.

- Applicant is in good standing with ECGRA's reporting requirements to date
- Applicant is in good standing with the IRS and state and local taxing bodies
- Applicant's headquarters is located in Erie County
- Applicant is 501(c)(3), a municipal authority, or a school district
- Applicant will be the recipient of the grant. (Pass through grants are not permissible.)
- Applicant is current on payment of any mandated workers compensation.
- Applicant is current on payment of unemployment or other required employee related insurances.
- Applicant's real estate taxes are not delinquent.

Disqualifiers

If any apply, your organization is not eligible.

Project Information

Project Name*

Film Industry Regional Expansion (FIRE) Phase 2 - Economic Impact Study

Brief Project Summary*

This grant will fund an economic impact study that will be used to garner support from local and state leaders to fund the strategic goals of the Film Society of Northwestern Pennsylvania to establish a film industry in Erie County.

Goals (broad) and Objectives (specific) of the project*

Economic Impact Study Goals and Objectives

Goal: Conduct quantitative research

Objectives:

- quantify the economic, employment, and tax impacts of Film Industry in Erie County
- Collect data and information about the role that the film industry plays in the overall enhancement of quality of life and arts and cultural environment
- develop scenarios of projected growth based on the current industry segment and how investment in this sector could yield short- and long-term dividends for the local, regional, and statewide economies
- profile the supply chain impacts and other sectors of the economy that are projected to grow as a result of the film industry segment.

-collect information about the operational phase, tourism impacts, and vendor/exhibitor data expenditures.

Goal: Conduct qualitative research

Objectives:

- conduct a minimum of ten interviews with key stakeholders, business leaders, and those closely associated with the film industry
- draw on existing information about the film industry, its accomplishments, its growth trajectory, and the Film Society's goals to describe the historic transformation of the region as a result of the efforts of the Film Society of Northwestern Pennsylvania and the film industry, and will situate and describe the current state of the industry locally, statewide, and nationally.

Goal: Conduct peer market research

Objectives:

- identify cities and towns throughout the U.S. that have utilized tax credits to launch their film industry
- profile up to 10 cities from start-up to present day to identify best practices and patterns of growth and success (from early to late stage) that have similar profiles to Erie, PA
- Also look at Pennsylvania markets such as Philadelphia and Pittsburgh for comparison and strategy.

Goal: Economic Impact Analysis and Reporting with IMPLAN

Objectives:

- report and detail: the total jobs supported in the short- and long-term (direct effect, indirect effect, and induced effect)
- total economic impact (direct, indirect, and induced)
- state and local taxes generated (direct, indirect, and induced) at the county level
- make clear the ways in which the industry is vital to the social, economic, environmental, and workforce development of the state and region.

Goal: Create marketing, communications, and print material

Objectives:

- Write a broad narrative for the local market
- Create graphics and a preliminary talking points to tell story to community members, influencers, and lawmakers

Project Narrative*

Describe your project in detail including the problem you are addressing and what you will do to solve that problem.

GEFO is unable to provide an Economic Impact report that is implicitly and/or explicitly requested to demonstrate the impact of film and television production and its related benefits that they can have on the Erie region.

Until GEFO can produce an Economic Impact report that is unique to the city and county of Erie and its short and long-term vision of economic growth, it won't be tangible for local and state leaders. It won't bridge the gap between what is proven and what could be. It is the familiar local setback of risk-averse thinking vs. potential achievement of the film production industry.

An Economic Impact Report is needed to lobby at the city, county, and state level for yearly allocation of funds to contribute to and sustain a working budget. In compliance with the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI), a membership organization standard to all Film Office's across the United States, a Film Office is required to provide services without financial compensation. GEFO is a program of the Film Society of Northwestern Pennsylvania, a 501c3, as it is the only organization in Erie that

coordinates individuals and companies that support and work in the film and television industry here in Erie, and as a community the network of film industry and film exhibition is one and the same. In addition, programming as an arts organization that provides film exhibition, film tourism, and future opportunities for economic development to construct an independent theater in opportunity zones or target areas of cultural development are supported by local and state funding and evidence of their benefits are further supported by an Economic Impact Report. Without financial and belief support from local and state leaders, GEFO will continue to rely solely on revenue, sponsorships, and private donations, of which the arts community in Erie competes over.

The Film Society of NWPA has gone as far as it can go with an all-volunteer staff. In order to serve the community with dedicated and reliable staff, gain leverage to keep volunteers and interns, conduct marketing efforts to attract the productions to see through the economic scenarios that the Economic Impact Report will lay out, and build up the workforce that will support the productions as they come to our community, local and state funding sources must exist for our region. The film office must not half-heartedly respond to inquiries, and we must be able go out and bring productions here.

The Economic Impact Report will put in-hand the justification needed to allocate funds for economic development and arts funding to the Film Society of Northwestern Pennsylvania and the Greater Erie Film Office.

Project Justification*

Describe why the pilot project is important and necessary (short and long term) to Erie County. Please provide evidence, research, and surveys documenting the problems. Standalone documents may be uploaded.

The Film Society of Northwestern Pennsylvania requires a report that describes its economic and growth potential. The study will seek to be a base from which the society can grow its profile and promote the region. This economic impact study will seek to answer the following overarching questions about the film industry in Northwestern Pennsylvania:

- What projects have taken advantage of the Pennsylvania Film Tax Credit (feature film, a television film, a television talk or game show series, a television commercial, a television pilot or each episode of a television series intended as programming for a national audience)?
- What local businesses are working directly in the industry?
- What industries are experiencing indirect and induced impact by the industry?
- Are film industry occupations good jobs? What makes Erie County attractive to someone working in the film industry?
- What is the economic impact of the projects that have been filmed in the region?
- What is the projected impact of increased investment in the film industry?
- What peer markets have achieved success? What steps did they take to get there? How long did it take?

The attached PA Department of Community and Economic Development report to the general assembly of the 2019-2020 Film Production Tax Credit Program demonstrates that each region of the state gains specific tax benefits and that tax credits remain unused at the end of the year. Almost 30% of the approved credits are for films with budgets below \$1 million, those that should be targets of Film Society marketing.

The attached PPT summarizes the previous studies that skimmed the surface of the film industry potential in Erie County.

Do you anticipate other funding sources?*

Please discuss your matching fund sources and financing partners.

The required 50% match has been committed. Erie County has pledged a \$10,000 match toward this study, and VisitErie has pledged \$2,500. In-kind match is pledged by the Film Society.

Project Benefits*

Please describe who will benefit and how. Will specific groups be targeted or served?

Film productions in Pennsylvania are beneficial to the state and its specific regions, and to the filmmakers. Outputs are Direct (actual production expenses), Indirect (production related food, hotels, recreation), and Induced (insurance, hospitals, dwelling rentals), and each of these categories shows positive economic impact. Economic impact will always be greater than the production budget itself.

Film and television production can revitalize workers with all levels of skills and talents. Part of the strategic action plan of the Film Society is to provide education for both youth and adults for production-related skills and partner with local universities and media-service organizations to prepare resources for hire. These individuals broadening skillsets are not only more marketable to visiting productions but within their own community.

Like other businesses in the growing tech and media industry in Erie County, film and television production will slow the "brain drain" and keep graduates in Erie, especially through partnerships with universities such as Penn State Behrend's BOLD-C program. With the assistance of the Film Society, this program connects students with local and visiting productions that rent equipment from the University to gain industry experience.

Amount Requested from ECGRA*

\$15,000.00

Project Budget*

Please click here to download a budget form

Film Society Econ Impact Grant Budget 051921 (1).xlsx

Personnel: \$2,500

\$1,250 requested from ECGRA, \$1,250 in-kind from Film Society

Marketing: \$2,500

\$1,250 requested from ECGRA, \$1,250 in-kind from Film Society

Contracted Services: \$25,000

Economic Impact Study - Parker Phillips

Secondary Data Research; Primary Data Research (interviews and data collection; IMPLAN Data Analysis and Data Acquisition AND reporting and messaging

Long term plans*

Is there a plan to continue the project? How will you sustain the project financially and administratively?

The final deliverable of the economic impact study is a detailed, actionable methodology for ongoing data collection and evaluation of impact to inform and strengthen the industry and the understanding of the industry as it grows over the next decade. As the Film Society and its board evaluates activities each year, additional research can be conducted at a reasonable scale. Each year, new data will be published in the Annual Report and sent to local and state leaders.

Project Partners*

Describe project partners and how they will be involved.

Consultants Parker Phillips to complete the economic impact study.

Local individuals/organizations that support or could support film/television productions.

Pennsylvania State and regional Film Offices.

Producers of reality show "Undercover Billionaire" shot in Erie County. Producers of the locally produced film "Unearth". Both are case studies.

Local organizations VisitErie, ECGRA, Erie County, Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership, and Erie Redevelopment Authority, among others.

Project Support*

Provide evidence of project support within the community. (Letters of support, resolutions, memoranda of understanding, etc. can be uploaded at the end of the application.)

Kathy Dahlkemper and John Oliver have pledged financial support. They both also believe in the value of a film office to attract film productions to a city, and the impact production film can have on a region's economy, in addition to growing the arts sector with film events and film tourism.

Letter of support from Kathy Dahlkemper to be provided separately via email.

Qualifications and Experience*

Description of the qualifications and experience of the project administrators and project leaders.

Nichole Parker of Parker Philips will lead the economic impact study. Parker has been conducting economic impact studies since 1999, utilizing a multitude of methodologies including REMI, linear cash flow, RIMS II, and IMPLAN. She is co-founder of Parker Philips and has over 20 years of experience in the economic impact and consulting field. Nichole is recognized as an expert in the field of economic impact having personally completed over 400 economic impact assessments in the past 25 years. Some examples of economic impact studies completed for corporations include: GE Corporate, GE Healthcare, GE Saudi Arabia, and AAR Corporation. Examples of her work with large academic health centers, health systems, or research collaboratives include: The University of Washington/UW Medicine (Washington), Association of Faculties of Medicine — AFMC (all Canadian Provinces), University of Connecticut/John Dempsey Hospital, University of Minnesota and owned health clinics and facilities, Indiana University/ Indiana Health, Penn Medicine, University of Kansas Medical Center, Norton Healthcare (Kentucky), UAB (Birmingham, AL), University of Kentucky/ Kentucky Cancer Consortium, Paul L. Foster School of Medicine Texas Tech University Health

Sciences Center, University of Pittsburgh, and University of Arizona/University of Arizona Health Network/Banner Health. Her economic impact work has also included working with National Heritage Areas/National Park Service quantifying the impact of cultural and historic tourism throughout the United States.

Prior to founding Parker Phillips, Parker was a Principal Project Director at Tripp Umbach for 16 years and established them as a national leader in economic impact studies for academic health centers, colleges and universities, corporations, major tourist events, and nonprofit entities. She worked as an independent consultant for many years and completed economic impact and community benefits work for Joint Commission International (Trinidad & Tobago), MinSec (Pennsylvania), Heritage Health Foundation (Pittsburgh, PA), and the Knoxville Public Safety Collaborative (Knoxville, TN).

Erika Berlin of the Film Society of Northwestern Pennsylvania will administer the project. Berlin has been the Executive Director of the Film Society since January 2020 and before that served as the Board Chair since March 2011. She has 20 years of professional experience and currently works as a management service volunteer for the Film Society in addition to her career as a marketing and program development consultant for Strategy Solutions Inc.

The Film Society established the Greater Erie Film Office 8 years ago, has been in contact and recognized by the state film office (Maryann Marisco, mamarisco@pa.gov) as the official film office of Northwestern Pennsylvania. From our early transfer from VisitErie, who had previously received inquiries with very little ability to support them) to the Film Society, we have received and assisted more than 75 film and television productions by connecting them to locations, crew members, equipment, hotels, transportation, restaurant recommendations, studio space, and other resources needed to conduct their business. The largest success to date was convincing the "documentary" film crew that Erie was the right city for Glenn Stearns to build a business from \$100 because of its cost of living and kindness of its people - and the dedication and, per the requirement of the Association of Film Commissioners International, to do it at no cost to the production.

In the eight years, staff has attended in-person and online workshops to gain training on film offices and fostered stronger relationships with other state film offices.

Ability to Complete the Project*

Describe your ability to complete the project within the allotted time.

The credentials of both the consulting agency Parker Phillips and the Executive Director of the Film Society instill confidence in the project completion.

The project will be conducted over the next 100 days, with priority given by the consultant agency to ensure that the Film Society be considered by local agencies during funding allocations timelines for additional arts grants.

Film Society staff has made themselves available to supervise and assist in this project success.

Timeline*

Please provide a project timeline with key milestones (12-month schedule).

The goal is to be complete in 90 days.

Month 1 - June

Project Kick-off
 Discussion Guide Development
 Peer Market Study
 Primary Data Collection

Month 2 - July

Secondary Data Research (statewide profile of film industry, national profile, and review of county level data on potential growth projections and potential)
 Schedule and complete interviews with key event stakeholders
 Peer Market Study
 Interviews
 Parker Philips collects operational data and develops scenarios for projection analyses
 Programming Models for the three geographies, IMPLAN, survey data entry, completing economic analysis, and qualitative summaries

Month 3 - August

Draft Report and Marketing/Outreach Materials
 Draft of Recommended Metrics for Ongoing Collection and Tracking

Month 4

Final Report and Marketing/Outreach Materials

Outcome Measurement*

Please describe how you will analyze the outcomes and gauge success of the project.

The outcomes will be analyzed by:

- The completion of the deliverables on time
- The thoroughness of the deliverables
- Coherence and completeness of deliverables
- "Print-ready" report - ready to send to printer and mail to relevant parties

Success of the project will be the completion of all deliverables within 90-100 days. The deliverables for the economic impact study are:

- A comprehensive economic impact and cultural analysis at the state and local level – Erie County, Northwestern Pennsylvania, and Pennsylvania – that looks at economic (quantitative) and community (qualitative) impact of the film industry;
- Completion of a baseline economic impact and potential growth scenarios in the industry segment based upon growth potential;
- A complete executive summary report and dashboard with model details, assumptions, and findings;
- Narrative report summarizing the impacts with a complete methodology and explanation of approach;
- Marketing and outreach documents with infographics, charts, PowerPoint, talking points, messaging, and social media graphics to illustrate and describe the regional value of the film industry that can be used to engage different audiences, including but not limited to economic development and tourism partners, event sponsors (both regional and national), elected officials, and other stakeholders;
- Detailed, actionable methodology for ongoing data collection and evaluation of impact to inform and strengthen the industry and the understanding of the industry as it grows over the next decade.

Organizational Information

Name of Organization*

The Film Society of Northwestern Pennsylvania

Organization Mission Statement*

The mission of the Film Society of Northwestern Pennsylvania (Film Society) is to Elevate Erie's film industry, Empower regional filmmakers, and Foster appreciation for the art of film.

Year Organization Was Established*

2008

Municipality in which headquarters is located*

Erie

County Council District in which headquarters is located*

[Click here to see a County Council District map](#)

County Council District #3

Website Address

www.filmerie.com

Staff/Volunteer Leadership*

List or upload a list of the names and titles of the organization's leadership.

Film Society NWPAs Staff and Volunteer Leadership 2021.xlsx

Erika Berlin

John C. Lyons

Jesse Olszewski

Tom Fox Davies

Betsy Butoryak

Deriyonah Reid

Board of Directors*

List or upload a list of the names, email addresses, and occupations of the organization's board members.

Film Society NWPAs Board Leadership 2021.xlsx

Dan Sloppy
Jacqueline George
John Vanco
Tommy Hartung
Joel Deuterman

Annual Summary Statistics

Please click here to download the Annual Summary Statistics form

Additional Documents

Most Recent Annual Report or Year End Review*

2020 FILM SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORT 051221.pdf

Current General Liability Insurance Certificate

Travelers insurance renewal Oct 2020.pdf

Organization Logo

Letters of Support

Letter of Support Film Society NWPA.docx

Other Supporting Material

FY-2019-20-Film-Tax-Credit-Program-Report-to-Legislature_Aug-2020-recd-9-15-2020.pdf

Other Supporting Material

Film Society NWPA_pitch deck 050421.pptx

Links

Upload a link

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

- Film Society Econ Impact Grant Budget 051921 (1).xlsx
- Film Society NWPA Staff and Volunteer Leadership 2021.xlsx
- Film Society NWPA Board Leadership 2021.xlsx
- 2020 FILM SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORT 051221.pdf
- Travelers insurance renewal Oct 2020.pdf
- Letter of Support Film Society NWPA.docx
- FY-2019-20-Film-Tax-Credit-Program-Report-to-Legislature_Aug-2020-recd-9-15-2020.pdf
- Film Society NWPA_pitch deck 050421.pptx

Budget (Do not include in-kind)

Category	Amount	Amount	Amount(s)	Breakdown of Other-in-kind Film Society	Narrative (Include a breakdown of)	Total
Personnel (15% maximum of the	\$1,250.00	\$1,250.00		in-kind Film Society	Contractor research, study	\$2,500.00
Marketing	\$1,250.00	\$1,250.00		in-kind Film Society	Facebook ads, website updates,	\$2,500.00
Utility Expense						\$0.00
Project/Programming Insurance						\$0.00
Equipment & Supplies						\$0.00
Contracted Services	\$12,500.00	\$12,500.00			Secondary Data Research; Primary	\$25,000.00
Instruction						\$0.00
Outcomes Measurement & Impact						\$0.00
Other						\$0.00
Totals	\$13,750.00	\$13,750.00	\$0.00			\$30,000.00



Name	Role
Erika Berlin	Executive Director
John C. Lyons	Director of Programming
Jesse Olszewski	Program Coordinator, Greater Erie Film Office
Tom Fox Davies	Program Coordinator, Greater Erie Film Office
Betsy Butoryak	Locations Volunteer, Greater Erie Film Office
Deriyonah Reid	Intern

Name	Role	Occupation	Phone	Email
Dan Sloppy	Chair, Finance, Treasurer	CPA, Schaffner, Knight, Minnaugh	814-490-6601	dsloppy@skmco.com
Jacqueline George	Board Member	Erie Dance Film Festival	818-601-0602	jjakeg@aol.com
John Vanco	Board Member	Director Emeritus, Erie Art Museum	814-881-6823	ivanco@erieartmuseum.org
Tommy Hartung	Board Member	Assistant Professor of Digital Art, Digital Media, Arts, and	814-490-2804	tlh5775@psu.edu
Joel Deuterman	Board Chair	President, Velocity Network	814-440-2629	joel@velocitynetwork.net