

LINCS GUIDELINES

Deadline: June 26, 2009

Linking Independents and Co-producing Stations (LINCS)

The LINCS funding initiative gives independent producers and public television stations an opportunity to form a production and presentation partnership by co-producing a program for presentation on public television. Through the LINCS initiative ITVS provides matching funds of up to \$100,000 to producer-station partnerships. The initiative has the dual objective of helping independent producers leverage the support from stations and helping stations access the talent of independent producers. The LINCS initiative provides funding for programs that speak to local and regional viewers with universal stories that have the ability to reach a national public television audience.

ITVS does not match stations and independent producers for LINCS. Partners must apply to LINCS together, after having created a partnership. A list of public television stations can be found on the PBS website.

Applying to LINCS

Please read carefully the following guidelines.

Complete the Online Application. Submit a copy of the completed form with the additional materials. These materials are outlined in How To Apply. These materials include a written proposal, a work-in-progress sample and a copy of a previously completed work in its entirety, including credits. (Demo reels, or clip reels of your previous work, will not be accepted.)

Please also note the following:

- Incomplete proposals will not be processed.
- Producers may submit only one application to the LINCS initiative per year.
- A producer cannot apply as a Primary Applicant and a Co-Applicant for two separate projects.

LINCS Is Looking For

- Programs that stimulate civic discourse and find innovative ways to explore regional, cultural, political, social and economic issues.
- Programs that will engage national as well as regional audiences, revealing universal themes through the lens of local perspectives and realities.
- Programs that speak to the ITVS mission of reaching underserved audiences with programs that take creative risks, explore complex issues and express points of view seldom seen on commercial or public television.
- Programs that are in production and can provide a work-in-progress sample.
- Single documentaries and innovative genre combinations.
- Programs of standard broadcast length (26:40 or 56:40).

LINCS Is Not Looking For

- Programs that are fully completed and only seeking distribution.
- Proposals for television series.
- Live action drama (fiction) programs.
- Programs intended solely for theatrical release.

Independent Producer Eligibility

- Applicant must be an "independent producer." This means that the individual applicants a) own the copyright of their production; b) have artistic, budgetary and editorial control of their project and; c) are NOT regularly employed as producers/directors by a public or commercial broadcast entity or film studio, including public access stations. Staff persons who are not producers/directors are allowed to apply. Note: the copyright may also be shared with the station partner.
- The independent producer must be at least 18 years old.
- Applicant must be a citizen or legal resident of the United States or its external territories.
- Applicant or co-applicant must have some previous film or television production experience in a principal role (producer, co-producer, director or co-director) as demonstrated by a sample of previously completed work.

Independent Producer Ineligibility

- Students are not eligible.
- Organizations such as universities, foundations, and nonprofit media organizations are not eligible.
- Persons regularly employed as producers/directors by a public or commercial broadcast entity including public access stations are not eligible.
- Producers representing foreign-based production entities are not eligible.
- Independent producers who are current signatories of an ITVS contract may not apply until that contract is closed upon final delivery of the funded program.
- Independent producers may only have one proposal under consideration at ITVS at any time. If the applicant has submitted a proposal for one funding initiative, he/she will need to contact ITVS programming staff to determine whether or not the project is still under consideration before applying to another funding initiative.

Station Eligibility

- Station partners must be affiliated with the PBS system and/or receive monies from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB).
- Stations may co-produce one or more LINCS programs, but are limited to one proposal per independent producer.
- Stations with LINCS shows currently in production are eligible to apply with additional proposals.
- Stations must be able to provide a Designated Station Contact to work closely with the independent producer through the production and delivery for broadcast of the program.

Station Ineligibility

- Cable/public/community access stations are not eligible partners for LINCS funding.

How LINCS Matching Funding Works

LINCS provides co-production funding of up to \$100,000 based on the secured funds and the station's in-kind contribution that the Producer has already been able to confirm as of the date of the application. In-kind contributions that do not come from the partnering stations are not eligible to be matched by LINCS co-production funding. Pending funds (funding neither received nor committed to by the application deadline) are not eligible to be matched by LINCS co-production funding.

If the production has a budget gap at the time the ITVS contract is signed, the producer will have up to 12 months to secure the balance of funding. ITVS production funds will not be released until all funds are fully in place. Programs must be completed within one year of securing the balance of funding. All LINCS funds are paid directly to the Producer.

The Station Producer Partnership

In a LINCS partnership, the station and independent producer collaborate in the production and presentation of the program. Stations and independents may build on existing relationships that they have with one another, or approach each other with new program ideas. The independent producer must maintain creative, editorial and financial control over the project. In some cases the station may share copyright. The station should provide creative and editorial input as well as cash and/or in-kind services. Some examples of station in-kind include: use of cameras and/or crew, editing equipment and editors, dubs, temporary office space, production management services and coverage for the project under the station's production and/or Errors and Omissions insurance policy. Presentation, outreach, publicity, website and station relations services should also be included in the value of the station's in-kind contribution. These may be responsibilities that are shared with the independent producer.

Producers may pay cash to the Station out of the production budget to cover certain production budget items. However, there are specific costs that LINCS funding cannot cover when paying station costs. LINCS funding may not be applied to any station staff salary costs, nor any unspecified Station overhead fees. Allowed costs are for specific items or services from the station: fees and rates for equipment, office space, edit suites, and professional services, preferably at a discount to Station's rate card. Budget approvals are made on a case-by-case basis prior to contracting the final budget.

LINCS is open to matching in-kind from more than one station and it is also agreeable to projects applying with more than one station involved as a co-producing partner. Agreements with each station must be included with the application materials. Please contact the LINCS staff if you have questions about partnering with more than one station.

The Letter of Agreement

The producer and the station must negotiate A Letter of Agreement between both parties, prior to the submission deadline. This agreement must be included with the proposal materials. Producers and stations are encouraged to approach each other as early as possible to begin that process. Please be aware that negotiating a Letter of Agreement may take several months, and some stations have internal deadlines for consideration of LINCS proposals some time in advance of the LINCS deadline.

Before composing your Letter of Agreement, please read **Building a LINCS Partnership**. The Letter of Agreement should describe the basic terms of the working relationship between the station and independent producer.

Stations are required to perform the following duties and accept the following responsibilities:

- Provide a specific staff member as the contact person for the project, the "Station Designated Contact". This person should be named in the agreement;
- Contribute in-kind support and/or cash contributions as documented in the LINCS Line-Item Budget;
- Provide PBS system communications and presentation to the public television system, including all PBS, APT, or NETA paperwork, submit to APT and/or NETA if appropriate, and work with ITVS on submission to PBS and PBS strands;
- Broadcast the program locally;
- Serve in an advisory capacity on program content including providing feedback on rough and fine cuts and counsel on technical requirements that are necessary for completion of the project for public television;
- Agree to negotiate a formal Station Producer Agreement if the program is offered an ITVS Production Agreement through LINCS.

In addition, ITVS requests that stations:

- Provide creative and editorial input and financial review;
- Provide appropriate packaging support and approval for the public television broadcast of the program;
- Provide a presentation package of submission, station relations, outreach and promotional support (these costs will be included in the matching funds or station in-kind services);
- Retain the right to use the program for local broadcast, local screenings, and on the Station's website, for the purpose of local promotion and outreach (these rights may be negotiated directly between the producer and station);
- Retain the non-exclusive right to exhibit, sub-license, and distribute the Program to all public television entities (the national public television broadcast rights). The station's license for these rights should be a four-year period.
- Retain appropriate promotional rights.

Producers are required to perform the following:

- Maintain creative, editorial and financial control, and be the majority interest in the copyright. In some cases the copyright may be shared with the station;
- Observe current PBS Production and Program Standards, including journalistic, underwriting, technical and credit guidelines;
- Adhere to approved budget, production schedule and delivery dates;
- Credit the station in the program and on promotional materials.

With LINCOS programs, often the station, not ITVS, presents the finished show to PBS and other public television distributors, and makes the show available to the national public television system.

If your program is selected for LINCOS funding, ITVS will give you advice on your Letter of Agreement and an opportunity to revise it into a formal Station Producer Agreement. However, please note that a well thought out Letter of Agreement reflects positively on the proposal and on the project's viability.

ITVS Funding Is Not A Grant

ITVS will hold broadcast, approval and revenue share rights over the Program and the Production.

Production Management. Accepted applicants will receive funding in the form of a Production Agreement that assigns to ITVS certain rights over the production. The independent producer will maintain creative and financial control and own all or partial copyright to the Program. ITVS will work in a production management role in direct communication with the producer. Deliverables such as narrative and financial reports, rough and fine cuts of the program, proof of copyright and insurances, clearance of rights and releases, and credit transcripts will be required by ITVS throughout the production for ITVS review and approval. These items will have deadlines for delivery according to a set production schedule. ITVS will approve each set of event-driven deliverables before payment is released.

Public Television Rights. The producer will license to ITVS and the Public Television Station the exclusive broadcast rights and the Public Television Rights for the Program, including video-on-demand, in the U.S. Territory for a minimum of four years, and the producer will observe the ITVS/PBS technical, editorial and journalistic standards and requirements.

Ancillary Rights. The producer will retain the right to distribute in ancillary markets not administered by ITVS, subject to ITVS regulations and approvals, and will retain a percentage of net revenues from subsidiary and ancillary distribution. The producer will share with ITVS an amount prorated to the percentage of funding that ITVS invests in the production.

Timeline

Internal Review: After the submission deadline, programming staff will review all applications for eligibility. If there are eligibility issues applicants will be notified within a week of the deadline.

Reader Review: Eligible applications will be forwarded to external readers consisting of public television staff and independent filmmakers. A group of finalists will be recommended for the panel review Applicants will be notified of their status within six to eight weeks of the submission deadline.

Panel Review:

A peer panel consisting of public television professionals and independent producers is convened to review projects and provide recommendations for funding. Applicants in this phase will be allowed to submit a new work-in-progress sample.

The entire proposal review and recommendation process takes up to five months. Station representatives and producers of programs selected for funding will be required to attend an orientation at our office in San Francisco.

PROGRAM FUNDING SELECTION

Programs are selected and funded through a license fee for public television broadcast. The detailed ITVS guidelines for funding explain the process and criteria for program selection. Decisions are based on the merits of a proposed project and at the discretion of ITVS professional staff and peer panels. Decisions on program selection are made solely by ITVS, which is an independent nonprofit corporation and not within the control of any other public or private entity.