



## PRESS RELEASE



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### Fort Smith International Film Festival Call for Entries!

*Entry Fee Waived for River Valley Filmmakers, Cash Prizes and Awards for Category Winners*

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FORT SMITH, AR: On February 1, 2021, the Fort Smith International Film Festival will open its virtual doors to filmmakers near and far to submit their work to the first ever film festival in the area. The inaugural festival accepts submissions in one of the following categories: Narrative Feature, People of Color, Indigenous Peoples, Music Video, Student Film, Documentary, Short Film, and Animation. Filmmakers should submit their films through [FilmFreeway.com](http://FilmFreeway.com).

The inaugural festival's theme is "Through Their Eyes", chosen for its physical representation of the masks we wore in 2020 and today due to the coronavirus pandemic, and for its metaphorical representation of the masks we wear daily. The festival will showcase diverse films that tell authentic stories that relate to the human experience. This 2-day event, set to take place on August 13-14, 2021 at 5 Star Productions, the Bakery District, and 906 Cocktail and Cigar Lounge, will explore diverse experiences and the way they coalesce on the big screen as cultural, historical, and identifying markers to who we are as artists, and as individuals. All are welcome to submit their work starting in February and lasting through June 6, 2021.

To entice local participation and to celebrate our local talent, River Valley Filmmakers are eligible to submit their first film for free now through April 30. Executive Director of the Fort Smith International Film Festival and President of the River Valley Film Society Brandon Chase Goldsmith had this to say, "In honor of our region's first film festival, we are offering River Valley Filmmakers 1 free movie entry on [FilmFreeway.com](http://FilmFreeway.com). To qualify, email a copy of your driver's license to [entries@fortsmithfilm.com](mailto:entries@fortsmithfilm.com) and use promo code: RVFilms21."

February 1 marks the beginning of the Early Bird submission period, when entree fees are the lowest. Early Bird entry fees are as follows: Standard entrants cost \$10, Gold Member entrants cost \$5, and River Valley entrants are free. Student entrants are free through May. Submission fees for Standard entrants, Gold Member entrants, and River Valley entrants increase after February 28, when the Early Bird submission period ends and the Regular Submission period begins on March 1 and lasts through April 4, 2021. Once the final deadline of June 6 has passed, filmmakers will be notified in July if their film will be showcased at the festival.

Prizes will be presented to category winners. The Champ Williams Documentary Award will be given to an outstanding nonfiction storyteller whose documentary entertains and acts as a potential catalyst for education and change. Named after the late Champ Williams, a Fort Smith native and Emmy winning director whose work was featured on The History Channel and Nat Geo Wild, passed away in 2015 at the age of 32.

UAFS will offer scholarship awards to High School entrants; \$2,000 for 1<sup>st</sup> place, \$1,000 for 2<sup>nd</sup> place, and \$500 for 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Additionally, other people and organizations have pledged monetary donations to contribute to other category winners.

Filmmakers are encouraged to visit our website at [www.FortSmithFilm.com](http://www.FortSmithFilm.com) for information about the festival. Patrons who wish to attend the festival may purchase tickets in the coming months.