

NM FILM & TV INDUSTRY: BECOMING A VENDOR

About the State Film Office

The New Mexico Film Office (NMFO), a division of the New Mexico Economic Development Department, is a state agency which serves the film industry locally, nationally, and internationally. The purpose of the NMFO is to market the state to the film industry, service the productions, and promote jobs for New Mexicans. We offer many resources for producers, film crew, local filmmakers and local vendors. The NMFO works with productions on the creative and financial aspects of their projects. The NMFO will also connect productions with local crew, vendor services and film liaisons throughout the state. All available resources through the NMFO can be viewed at www.nmfilm.com.

Productions choose locations

In addition to state incentives, the creative and financial aspects of a film play major roles in how a location is chosen. The budget considerations include but are not limited to local crew and vendor availability, traveling distances and available local amenities. The creative considerations are countless. They are primarily dictated by the script; therefore the geography, the architecture, the vegetation and the weather of an area are considered. Those involved in the decision making process may include Studio Executives, Producers, Director, and/or the Production Designer as well as input from the Location Scout/Manager.

Physical Presence Requirements

Vendors must meet the physical presence requirements for their payment of services to qualify towards a production's tax incentive. The business must be registered in New Mexico, have a specific space designated for the services, including a visible sign, and those services must be conducted at that location. The owner or one of their employees must be a NM resident. (See NMAC 3.13.9, sections 7-10.)

Connecting with Productions

Productions that are officially funded and have actors in place are considered "green-lit." Green-lit productions are announced in a press release and provide information to the NMFO to be listed on the website's home page and bulletin board. The productions may ask that their phone numbers and/or address not be listed on the site. Most often, there is only a production office's fax or email available. Although they are not always accurate, industry publications will sometimes list upcoming productions and their potential locations. Under the "information for locals" section of nmfilm.com, there is a tab entitled "links to other resources" where these publications are listed. If you are a vendor that would like to market your services, connecting with the local crew members who make the purchases will be a more effective approach.

Supplies

Along with choosing a location, the decision of whether sets need to be built needs to be made. Interior set-building requires a sound stage or a suitable warehouse, the purchase of lumber, paint, plaster, and the rental of lifts and other heavy equipment. Set dressing and costume departments make purchases and rentals from antique stores, thrift shops, wholesale and retail stores. Every production office needs telecommunications, paper supplies, office supplies, Xerox machines and fax machines. Some of the other types of businesses, services or companies needed are: local car rental companies travel agencies, hotels, motels, apartment and home rentals, portable bathrooms, mechanics, local physicians, dentists, medical specialists, body workers, portable air conditioning and heating, propane, garden stores, specialty foods, bakeries...the list goes on.

Purchases by Crew

Every film or television project is set up the same way. Department heads are hired for specific craft departments. Department Heads and their crew are responsible to their department's budget and are the people who will be looking for local vendors. Some craft departments have job positions that specifically do the buying. Recommendations from film colleagues who have worked with local businesses on other film projects are the major source of new business. Crew is always looking for the best and most efficient purchasing opportunities.

NMFO Online Film & Television Industry Directory

As a state entity, the NMFO does not recommend and does not hire crew or vendors for productions. However, an essential way to get your name out there is the NM Film & Television Industry Directory at nmfilm.com – free to NM residents and NM based vendors. Simply go to our site, click on the application link under Industry Directory then register. You may choose up to six categories. If you do not see a category that fits your business, use this directory to locate the industry professionals you would work with as a vendor.

Being Pro-active

Depending upon your business type, we recommend determining which film department applies to your business and then sending information to locals that work as Heads of those departments. Consider contacting the local film unions such as the IATSE Local 480 to determine the departments as this union's members are often in job positions whose responsibilities include purchasing (www.iatselocal480.com). Under the "nm crew programs" tab on nmfilm.com, there is a link entitled "about crew." Here you will find the "chain-of-command" crew chart and list of job descriptions that may also help you determine who to contact. Contact information for crew is listed within the online Industry Directory mentioned above.

Film-Friendly

How "film-friendly" is your company? Quick response time is vital. Be prepared for unusual requests which may include large or unique orders, last minute needs, atypical store hours, etc. Flexibility is the key. Film rates are also common for bulk orders. If a film production company contacts your business, designate one person as the main contact for all production inquiries. The employees who come into first contact with your film clients should know where to direct them. Be sure to evaluate how accommodating you would like your business to be.

Payment Process

Any significant purchase or rental for a film project will mostly be conducted with a Purchase Order (PO). This is the standard in the film and media industry, and companies who cannot work with POs are likely to lose the business. Payments are scheduled like any other business; however due to the rapid nature of film and television production, it is recommended to invoice right away. In some instances, a deposit may be considered. If you do not receive a payment from a production and their local offices have closed, contact the New Mexico Film Office for post-production information. (A production can not receive their tax credit until all NM vendors are paid.)

Repetitive Business

Film companies are temporary businesses often overseen by another entity such as a studio. It will depend how much of your business is film-related, the variety of industries you cater to, if your business is unique to the industry and the location of your business. Relationships and references are particularly vital to this industry; if your business is film-friendly, the word will spread.