



# Institute for Italian & Sardinian Studies

A 501(c)(3) non-profit educational/cultural/media arts organization

## Institute For Italian & Sardinian Studies

### FISCAL SPONSORSHIP | APPLICATION AND GUIDELINES

The Institute for Italian & Sardinian Studies (IFISS) Fiscal Sponsorship Program was established in 2010 to develop and support independent production of documentary films on Italy and Sardinia. The Program fulfills this mission by offering fiscal sponsorship to film and video projects and by providing independent filmmakers with valuable information and guidance through our workshops. This program reflects the Institute for Italian & Sardinian Studies commitment to outreach and development of both emerging and established film and video makers as related to Italy and Sardinia.

#### WHAT IS FISCAL SPONSORSHIP?

Fiscal Sponsorship allows your non-commercial project to apply for funding from organizations that require non-profit tax-exempt status. Non-profit status is required by many foundations, corporations and government agencies in order to be eligible for funding since many do not accept application proposals directly from individuals. Additionally, 501(c)(3) status allows you to receive tax-deductible charitable contributions from individuals—a major incentive for individuals considering making a donation to your project.

As your fiscal sponsor, IFISS acts as an umbrella organization for your project and accepts and administers funds on your behalf. IFISS is legally responsible for the funds received on behalf of fiscally sponsored projects and must insure that the funds are used for charitable activities, as agreed upon between the donor and recipient, and that the donor reporting requirements are met and in a timely fashion.

Fiscal sponsorship broadens the available avenues you can pursue for funding of your project. It does not mean that we are your producers, fundraisers, or in any way connected to the content or actual production of your project. Fiscal sponsorship does not provide grants and we do not do research for individual project funding. All artistic and proprietary rights, title, interest in and to the completed project will belong to the Project Director and may be copyrighted in Project Director's name.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

#### MAIL

Institute for Italian & Sardinian Studies  
Fiscal Sponsorship Program  
2699 York Road  
Columbus, Ohio 43221

#### PHONE

800-430-6414

#### EMAIL

fiscal.sponsorship@ifiss.org

### DEADLINES + NOTIFICATION

IFISS accepts fiscal sponsorship applications on a rolling basis. You may submit your project for review at any time. However, you are strongly encouraged to contact IFISS prior to submitting your application if you have any questions about the application process. All inquiries should be directed to the Fiscal Sponsor Committee at IFISS (email [fiscal.sponsorship@ifiss.org](mailto:fiscal.sponsorship@ifiss.org)).  
*Notification of acceptance or not is usually within a month.*

#### APPLICATION DELIVERY

Applications must be delivered to our office by mail. **(No faxed or emailed applications will be accepted.)**

#### APPLICATION NOTIFICATION + RETURN MATERIALS

All applicants will be notified of acceptance or rejection via email by the date above. Upon acceptance, you will be required to participate in an orientation meeting or call if you live outside the Ohio area. Rejections will receive feedback on why your project was rejected. Rejected project sample DVDs will be returned *if a SASE is included*.

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## INSTITUTE FOR ITALIAN & SARDINIAN STUDIES

The Institute for Italian & Sardinian Studies (IFISS) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational, cultural, and media arts organization, founded and incorporated in 2005 in Columbus, Ohio, and is committed to providing unique educational opportunities in the arts, culture, and the media arts, include photography, videography, art, and cultural workshops for students and adults in Italy and Sardinia. IFISS facilitates opportunities for the promotion and support of independent documentary digital media, films, and videotapes and film and video makers as related to Italy and Sardinia that support our mission and values.

Fiscal Sponsorship accepts projects that reflect the mission of our organization.

## ELIGIBILITY

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In order to be eligible to apply to Institute for Italian & Sardinian Studies Fiscal Sponsorship Program, you must meet the following criteria:

- **PROJECT MUST BE FILM, VIDEO or MULTIMEDIA**  
*We do not sponsor film festivals or film related events.*
- **PROJECT DIRECTOR MUST HAVE U.S. SOCIAL SECURITY** or have a **PRODUCTION COMPANY WITH U.S. FEDERAL I.D. NUMBER**
- **SAMPLE TAPE REFLECTS STRENGTH of director and project.** Sample should be from the project for which the director is applying. For special documentary cases, previous work sample will be accepted

## PROGRAM BENEFITS

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The following is a list of benefits you are entitled to receive through our Fiscal Sponsorship Program:

- **NON-PROFIT STATUS AND TAX-DEDUCTIONS FOR FUNDRAISING PURPOSES**  
Fiscal sponsorship allows you to apply for grants from foundations and government organizations that can only fund non-profit tax-exempt organizations and offers tax deductions to individuals who wish to contribute to your project.
- **INDIVIDUALIZED ON-GOING CONSULTATIONS**  
During your project's development you can meet with the program staff to discuss your fundraising strategies, individual proposals or the distribution plan for your completed film.
- **WORKSHOP DISCOUNTS**  
You are eligible for the discounted rate for all IFISS workshops (up to 20%) on the business aspects of filmmaking. If you live outside of Sardinia or Ohio, we do prepare information resource packets for a number of our workshops, which you can request for a reduced fee. This way, you still have access to helpful insight through our workshop series.
- **ONLINE PROJECT LISTING**  
The option to list your project on IFISS's website offering your donors a way to make online credit card donations via our secure server, while profiling and publicizing your project to potential funders and audiences.

## REVIEW CRITERIA

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Projects are accepted by IFISS after being reviewed through a competitive process using the following criteria:

- **RELEVANCE + SIGNIFICANCE OF PROJECT TO INSTITUTE FOR ITALIAN & SARDINIAN STUDIES**  
Does the subject matter and project meets the goals of IFISS mission?
- **STRENGTH OF STORYTELLING + AUTHORITY OVER SUBJECT MATTER**  
Is the overall quality of the proposed project clearly defined and does it demonstrate a deep understanding of the subject matters. Does the treatment reflect the subject matter in a creative and concrete way?
- **QUALITY OF THE SAMPLE TAPE**  
Does the sample tape support the project well? Does it indicate the solid ability of the director to fully execute the proposed project?
- **BUDGET**  
Is the budget well developed and realistic for the project? Does the proposal budget match the needs of the project and appropriate?
- **FUNDAISING ABILITY**  
Are funds already secured or likely to be secured? Has the project director identified appropriate sources of funding for the project? Are the potential funders appropriate for the project?
- **DEMONSTRATED ABILITY OF KEY PROJECT PERSONNEL**  
Does the applicant and the proposed personnel have the ability to successfully complete the proposed project?
- **DISTRIBUTION POTENTIAL**  
Is there a distribution and outreach plan for the completed project that is realistic and appropriate?
- **LIKELIHOOD OF PROJECT COMPLETION**  
Does the proposed project have a very high likelihood of being successfully completed?

## GENERAL SPONSORSHIP

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### GENERAL SPONSORSHIP

*\$50 Annual Fee*

IFISS serves as the project's *exclusive* fiscal sponsor throughout the production of the project.

If you are in need of assistance, please contact the Fiscal Sponsorship Program via email at [fiscal.sponsorship@ifiss.org](mailto:fiscal.sponsorship@ifiss.org) or by phone at 800-430-6414.

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## HOW FISCAL SPONSORSHIP WORKS

Some independent commercial films begin as non-profit projects. After getting donations and/or grants, you can get investors. However, once the project has investors you may not continue to fundraise for non-profit grants and donations. Should you be sponsored by IFISS and then get an investor on board, you will need to close your account; according to the IRS, at that point you are no longer considered a non-profit entity.

Contributions to your project are made payable to Institute for Italian & Sardinian Studies and mailed to IFISS. We deposit the contributions in our bank account until the Project Director requests them.

Fund requests are disbursed as checks and made out to the Project Director's name or the production company's name. Checks are disbursed to one name only. You are responsible for your project expenses. You must maintain your own bookkeeping records and report to IFISS how the funds were spent by submitting copies of receipts, invoices, cancelled checks or similar documentation.

Project Director Responsibilities Includes:

- Handling your own production accounts. Expend any raised funds on the specific production requirements of the grant/donation.
- Upon conclusion of any grant/donation expenditures, or at the end of the calendar year, you must supply IFISS with an expense report that indicates how funds provided through IFISS were spent.
- You must maintain proper tax records should IFISS be requested to provide any such records to tax authorities in the event of an audit -credit IFISS as a fiscal sponsor in its end credits of the film -supply social security an/or tax ID information to IFISS prior to the receipt of any funds.
- Understand that IFISS will report all funds paid to the filmmaker to the Internal Revenue Service and it is his/her responsibility to pay any taxes due on the funds.
- In the case that a granting organization/individual produces a check payable to the wrong party, the fiscal sponsorship recipient assumes the responsibility of following up with the granting party to ensure that they make a new check payable to IFISS.
- IFISS will issue the Project Director a 1099 Independent Contractor tax form at the end of the year for the entire amount of the grant. It then becomes the responsibility of the Project Director to account for the money as income and expenses for all tax purposes.

### *Administrative Fee*

- 8%: regular contributions
  - 8%: National Endowment for the Humanities, State Humanities Councils or other types of government grants
  - 10%: credit card/online donations
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## APPLICATION CHECKLIST

The following items must be included in your Application Package to our Fiscal Sponsorship Program. (All the forms are included below and downloadable from <http://www.ifiss.org/>.)

**APPLICATION COVERSHEET** (3 copies)

**PROJECT PROPOSAL** (3 copies):

Include Project Budget guidelines (see below). We want to see exactly what you anticipate sending to funders. If there is a specific grant you will be applying for, feel free to send us the proposal you will use for that funder. However, your proposal must still include all the items listed in our Proposal Guidelines.

**SAMPLE REEL OR TRAILER & DESCRIPTION FORM** (3 copies):

This details how the sample reel (DVD) relates to your current project. (Note: for documentaries, the sample **MUST** be from the proposed project. For narratives, you may submit prior work.) The sample or trailer must be submitted in DVD format (1 copy). Slides, storyboards or audio samples for the proposed project are *not* acceptable.

**APPLICATION FEE & FORM** (1 copy):

Non-refundable fee of \$50, payable to **Institute for Italian & Sardinian Studies** via check or money order.

**SUBMIT COPIES OF THE ABOVE (DO NOT STAPLE) IN THE FOLLOWING ORDER:**

- 1) Application Coversheet
- 2) Sample Reel or Trailer w/ Description Form
- 3) Proposal
- 4) Budget
- 5) Application Fee Form (with payment)

**DO NOT bind your application and/or support materials; DO NOT use heavy binders or expensive presentation folders. We will discard them.**

## PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

Every proposal varies in format, but the following elements must be included. Please note that the following elements should serve as guidelines but not a required format. If you use a different proposal format, please be sure to include the information detailed below in order to present a strong and competitive proposal. The proposal submitted to Institute for Italian & Sardinian Studies should look exactly like if you were submitting a proposal to a funder.

## APPLICATION BREAKDOWN

### **INTRODUCTION** (1-2 paragraphs)

Describe why your project is important and sum up what you are trying to do in a sentence or two. This paragraph should contain a concise description of the project that clearly states the length of finished piece, whether it will be color or black & white, the original format, and the medium of the completed project.

- Demonstrates that the project is well conceived and well planned.
- Convinces the reader to keep reading and that the project is compelling.
- Convinces the funder that the applicant is qualified and credible.
- Convinces the funder that you provide important services and have the respect of the community you wish to serve.

## APPLICATION BREAKDOWN (cont'd)

### NEEDS STATEMENT (1-2 paragraphs)

Why is the project needed and how did you become involved with it?

- Have there been other projects on the same topic? If yes, how is yours different and why is it needed?
- Helps the reader understand the nature of the problem your project will address.
- Convinces the reader that you are not making this up: the problem really exists and there is evidence to support you
- Convinces the reader that the project is in harmony with its funding priorities.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION + TREATMENT (1-3 pages)

This section should include the format and style of your project, content, needs statement and visual treatment. Describes the big picture vision and explains how you envision translating your story from page to screen.

- Discuss the structure of your story and how you will organize the elements into a coherent and interrelated dramatic whole from beginning to middle to end.
- Convinces the reader that you have a well-conceived structure and plan for your project.

### FUNDRAISING PLAN (1 paragraph and a List of Potential Funding Sources)

How are you going to fund this project? Include a comprehensive list of potential donors that specifies the amounts you are planning on requesting from the sources you identified. *The total amount listed must add up to or exceed the total amount of your budget.* Detail any funds you have already received or that are secured. Be sure to explain if you are going to individual donors for solicitations, or if you are planning a fundraiser. If available, please include information on funds you were able to successfully raise for other projects.

- Describes a plan for the successful completion of the project.
- Convinces the funder you have a well-conceived plan for securing adequate funds for the completion of the project.
- List any funds raised to date and grants pending.
- List in-kind contributions and make sure that cash grants and in-kind donated services are clearly separated.
- List potential funding sources from government, foundations and individuals. Be specific.
- Indicate any sources that have funded you in the past and to which you are reapplying.

*Applications without a thorough fundraising plan will not be considered.* Additionally, if you have not already identified appropriate sources of funding for your project, we strongly encourage you to apply at a later date once you have a complete fundraising strategy.

### TIMELINE + CURRENT STATUS OF PROJECT (1 paragraph)

This section should clearly articulate at what stage the project is currently at in production. While it is not necessary to delineate a section specifically to this information, be sure it is very clear in your proposal what the current stage of the project is and your projected timeline to completion.

## APPLICATION BREAKDOWN (cont'd)

- Describes the length of time needed for each phase of production.
- Clearly state at what stage your project is currently at in production.
- Can be written as a list, does not need to be in narrative form.
- Convinces the reader that your project is well-planned and has realistic goals.

### **DISTRIBUTION PLAN** (2-3 paragraphs)

Who is your primary audience and how will you reach them? Describe them in as much detail as possible. What venues, distributors or alternative strategies will you use and why? Funders want to see who will benefit from the work they fund so be sure you are as specific as possible in this section. It is extremely important to include detailed information and avoid generalizations about your audience.

- Convinces the reader that you have a well-conceived and well-planned strategy for delivering your project to your audience.
- Clarifies whom the audience is and how you are going to reach them.
- Reassures the funder that their support will be disseminated to those who you have identified as being able to benefit from the project.
- List plans for all territories that are applicable including: theatrical, television, educational, home video, and multimedia applications.
- Discuss specific community groups, constituencies or partnerships that will work with you to promote the project.
- Name a distributor, if possible and discuss their track record.
- Consider contacting distributors or broadcasters early in the production and request a letter of support from them to strengthen your proposal.
- Discuss steps you'll take to produce and promote any ancillary activities for the project, for instance a website or study guide.

### **PROJECT PERSONNEL** (1 paragraph per person)

Even if this is a very personal project, film/video production is a group effort. Funders want to know the credentials of those working with you. If you do not have previous experience as director/producer, make sure the rest of the personnel associated with the project are highly qualified. Try to consider how you would feel giving money to someone without a track record, and then plan the rest of your team accordingly to bolster your proposal. You may attach bio or resume for yourself and additional primary personnel.

- Bios of principle production personnel, including producer, **director**, cinematographer, writer and editor. Include significant credits for each, and any major awards.
- Brief bios (two or three sentences) of any advisors and/or scholars you have on the project.
- Convinces the funder that you have assembled a team of personnel who are adequately experienced and able to assist in the successful completion of the project.
- Reassures the funder that if do not have a specific skill set you have identified persons who can assist you.

### **BUDGET** (1 to 3 pages)

Total budget for your project should include all phases of production from pre through post-production. Be as detailed as possible, but also include a summary sheet with grand totals for each category as your first page. Be realistic. Consider the viability of the project and its fundability.

## **APPLICATION BREAKDOWN (cont'd)**

Make sure your budget is consistent with your narrative. The amounts you list will be reviewed for accuracy and for any omissions based on the activities, travel, and so forth that you discussed in your narrative.

- Detailed line item budget divided into pre-production, production, and post-production. Use general headings and sub-totals for each income and expense category.
- Show funds raised to date and in-kind contributions in separate columns. Anticipated revenue and expenses should be clearly identified.
- Convinces the funder that the revenue and expenses have been well thought out, are reasonable, necessary and adequate to carry out the project.

### **DRAMATIC OR NARRATIVE PROJECTS**

Please also include a detailed treatment and/or the first 10 pages of your script.

### **REFERENCES**

Include two names with both phone and email address for two professional or personal references. No need to include formal letters of.

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## **SAMPLE / TRAILER CONSIDERATIONS**

Sample or trailer should be a work-in-progress for the proposed project. For documentaries projects, this is MANDATORY. For narrative projects, the sample may of the director's previous film/video work (ideally the same genre), and should relate stylistically or thematically to your currently proposed project. Use the Sample Description Form to elaborate on this.

*Directors Reels or reels from your Director of Photography or Editor will not be accepted.*

### **SAMPLE OR TRAILER DESCRIPTION FORM**

Use this form to make a statement on how the sample or trailer relates to your current project. The sample is crucial in the fundraising process and is often required by funders (and this is why we require it at this stage). A strong sample can work to strengthen your overall request tremendously. At the same time, a weak sample tape will reflect negatively on your abilities as a director. You may submit this work on DVD (preferred) or VHS. Please check the sample before sending them to us. If the sample is longer than 10 minutes, cue it to the segment you feel best represents your skill and the proposed project. Label your samples properly with title and name of director/administrator.

**Institute for Italian & Sardinian Studies**  
**FISCAL SPONSORSHIP APPLICATION COVER PAGE**

Application Deadline Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  General  Pass-Through

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*\*Must fill out*

Project Title\*:

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Project Director (or primary contact for project)\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Role in Project\*:  Producer or Co-Producer  Director  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Address\*: \_\_\_\_\_

City\*: \_\_\_\_\_ State\*: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code\*: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (w) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ (h)\* \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ (c)\* \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Email\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization/Company: \_\_\_\_\_  N.A.

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Director of Proposed Project\*: \_\_\_\_\_  (Check if same as Project Director)

Director phone and email: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

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Project Description\* (1-2 sentences): \_\_\_\_\_

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Genre\*:  Documentary  Narrative  Experimental  
Anticipated RT: \_\_\_\_\_ minutes Shooting Format:  Film  Video  
Production Stage\*:  Pre- Production  Production  Post-Production  Distribution

Entire Project Budget\*: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Cash raised to date\*: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ In-Kind Donations: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Is this your first independent film/video project?  Yes  No

*If no, cash raised for previous film/video project: \$ \_\_\_\_\_*

What is your filmmaking background (i.e. editor; first-time director, etc.)?

Have you been fiscally sponsored by IFISS before?  Yes  No

*If yes, what project and what year? \_\_\_\_\_*

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How did you hear about our fiscal sponsorship program, please choose:

- Internet Search  Screening of IFISS Film  IFISS Representative  IFISS Email Newsletter  
 Referral from Organization  Referral from a Colleague  other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Institute for Italian & Sardinian Studies**  
**SAMPLE OR TRAILER DESCRIPTION FORM**

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Project Title\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Director\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Director of Sample/Trailer\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Sample Work\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Length of Sample Tape\*: \_\_\_\_\_ minutes

Sample/Trailer Relationship to Current Project:

- Trailer/Sample (for documentary submissions, this *must* be from proposed project)
- Previously Completed Work

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Describe the sample tape and explain its relationship to your completed project. Address any technical deficiencies and how close the sample tape will technically compare to your project once completed. If the sample tape is a previously completed work (for narratives only), be sure to explain how it relates to your proposed project either thematically and/or stylistically.

\_\_\_\_\_

*Please remember that your sample tape should be a sample of your proposed project. If you are proposing a narrative project, it may be a previously completed work but it must be by the director of the proposed project. No samples will be accepted from your producer, directors of photography or cinematographer.*

*Please submit sample in DVD format. Submit only ONE sample and note the best 5-minute section you would like the Committee to review. If you have any questions, please call 800-430-6414.*

**Institute for Italian & Sardinian Studies  
APPLICATION FEE PAYMENT FORM**

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Date Application Mailed: \_\_\_\_\_

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Project Director\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Title\*: \_\_\_\_\_

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**OPTION 1**

**PAYMENT BY CHECK OR MONEY ORDER**

Enclosed is a \$50 check or money order, payable to:

Institute for Italian & Sardinian Studies  
Fiscal Sponsorship Program  
2699 York Road  
Columbus, Ohio 43221

Include for "Fiscal Sponsorship Application" fee on memo/subject line of check

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*This Application fee is non-refundable. If selected for Fiscal Sponsorship, this will become your \$50 Annual Fee.*