

FILMONTARIO

F I L M · T E L E V I S I O N · I N T E R A C T I V E

26 January 2024

Budget Committee
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen St. W.,
10th floor, West Tower,
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Sent by email: buc@toronto.ca

Re: 2024 City of Toronto Budget

Dear Budget Committee Members,

FilmOntario is pleased to submit the following comments as you undertake your final consideration of the 2024 City of Toronto Budget. We are a not-for-profit industry consortium representing the over 45,000 workers in the province's film and television industry, including those employed by Ontario-based production companies, unions, studios, equipment suppliers and animation and visual effects studios, as well other industry organizations in the province's screen-based industry. A large majority of our members live and/or work and own businesses in the City.

We would like to take this opportunity to highlight the importance of the work done by the Film Office in supporting productions that choose Toronto as their home for filming and in attracting production to the City. Although there was a downturn in spending in 2023 due to labour disruptions in the American market, in a typical year the film and television industry generates approximately \$2.5 billion in spending in the City. It is important the Film Office continue to be properly resourced and staffed in order to support the work they do for the sector, so that we can continue to grow our industry.

As the industry returns to work both here and around the world, we are facing an environment that is more competitive than ever for filming dollars, so it is crucial that the Film Office has the tools it needs to keep the City top of mind as a world-class filming jurisdiction. Last week, [Moviemaker magazine](#) named Toronto as the best place to live and work as a moviemaker in 2024 – a credit to the work of the Office in highlighting the City's positive attributes for those who make film and television here. This type of success attracts more business to Toronto.

The work the Film Office does behind the scenes is equally important to our industry, and helps lay the groundwork for future growth. The resources that are devoted to supporting training opportunities, in partnership with local unions and community organizations, are a key resource for attracting new and retaining existing workers in the sector. Additionally, they provide opportunities to individuals from equity-deserving groups who may have faced barriers to entering the industry, ensuring that a diversity of voices are represented in the stories that our industry tells.

We also want to highlight the work of the permitting staff, who make sure that things go smoothly for both productions and the residents of Toronto. Production decisions are often made quickly, and the need to access City streets, parks and buildings tends to develop quickly with very short turnaround times. Permitting staff consistently rise to the occasion, providing excellent customer service for productions of all sizes and managing potential issues promptly.

We have highlighted just a small portion of the work the Film Office does to support our industry in the City of Toronto. Other initiatives, such as support for the industry's sustainability initiatives, are equally important and all contribute to the City's reputation as a world-class filming jurisdiction. This reputation is part of what goes into decisions like the one announced last week by Amazon MGM Studios, making their first long-term commitment for Canadian studio space at Pinewood Toronto.

In order to continue this work, it is important that the Film Office continue to be properly resourced in Budget 2024 and beyond. With the support of the City and the Film Office staff, we look forward to continue building Toronto's film and television industry for many years to come.

Thank you very much for your consideration of these issues. If you have any questions about any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact our Managing Director, Cynthia Lynch, at clynch@filmontario.ca.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Jonas
Co-Chair, FilmOntario



Jayson Mosek
Co-Chair, FilmOntario



Cynthia Lynch
Managing Director and
Counsel, FilmOntario

cc: Councillor Paula Fletcher
Chair, City of Toronto Film, Television and Digital Media Board

Marguerite Pigott
Film Commissioner and Director of Entertainment Industries
Economic Development and Culture