

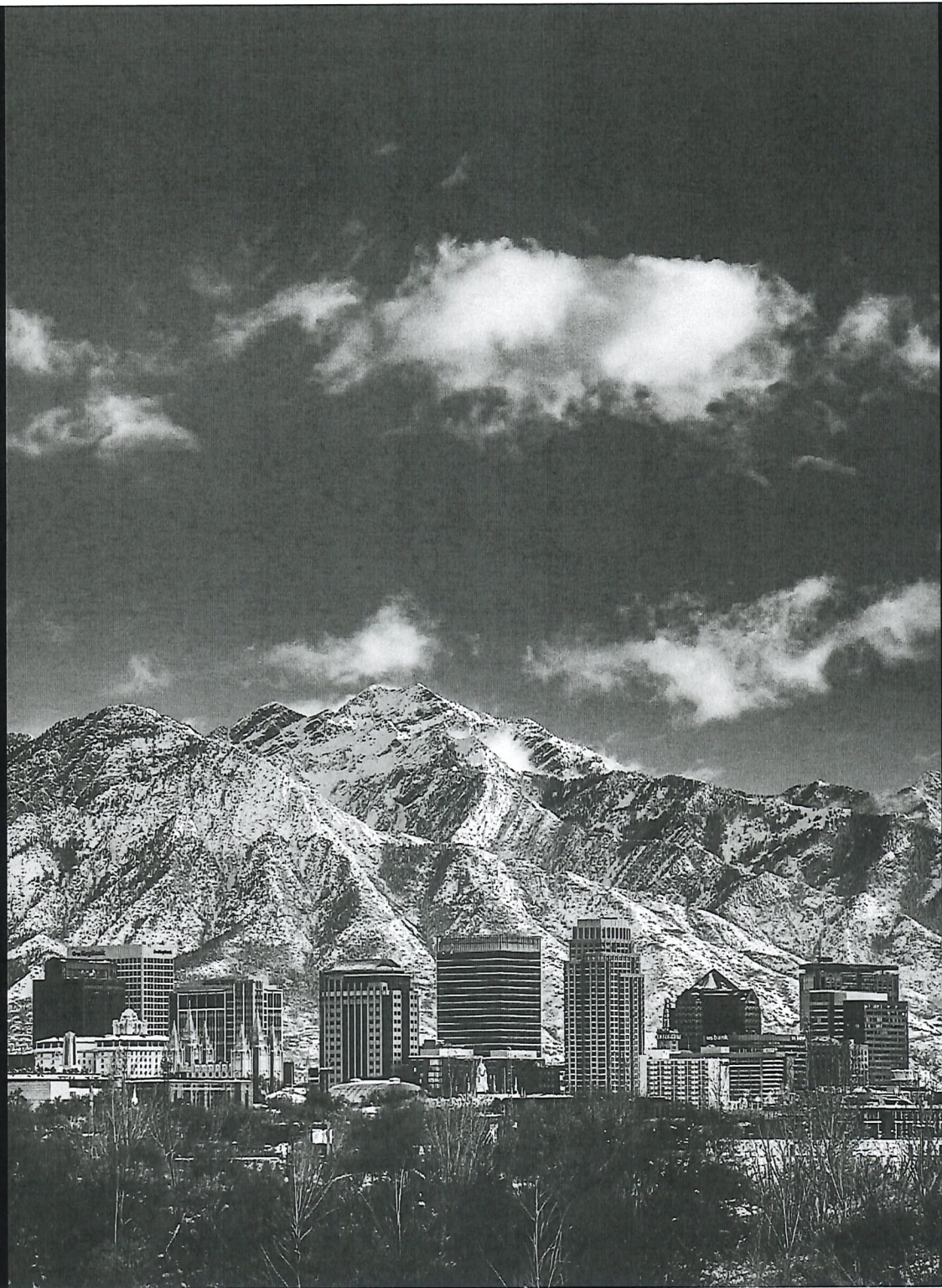
THE FUTURE OF FILMMAKING IN UTAH

The Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity Board.
January 8th, 2026

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I created Sundance to give a platform to new, independent voices and stories that were not being told in mainstream Hollywood.”

Robert Redford



AGENDA FOR TODAY

01 Paradigm Shift

Utah's filmmaking future will be forged by carrying forward the credibility, and creative excellence established over many years—evolving that legacy into a renewed mission that serves filmmakers and storytellers.

02 Proposal

In time with the idea of moving to an innovation economy and culture, instead of creating a new film festival, the focus is on creating an ecosystem that will put Utah on the map as the place for filmmaking, film financing, film technology, and film streaming and screening. Long-term funding through private and corporate investment—supported by meaningful incentives—will empower local filmmakers to benefit directly from the ecosystem’s success while attracting partners from beyond the state.

- A. Create and establish filmmaking labs to be held in Utah to teach new filmmakers how to tell their story using technology and AI. The labs would be done in partnership with the Sundance Mountain Resort, and Utah’s universities including Utah Valley University, the University of Utah, Brigham Young University, and others.
- B. Enhance incentive programs for filmmakers to make their films in Utah, to be competitive with Texas, Louisiana, Georgia, New Mexico, and New York.
- C. Create sound stages at the Convergence Hall at The Point where films could be made using the latest technology and AI. The AI enabled sound stages would be the first of its kind in the US with AI technology, dedicated database center, and dedicated power source.
- D. Engage Harbor Fund to move to Utah, and set up their annual summit at the Sundance Resort, changing its name to Harbor Funds at Sundance. This would become THE place in the country for filmmakers, actors, producers, financiers and philanthropists to gather to obtain/provide funding for new films of all types – for the big screen, for television, for YouTube, etc. Long-term funding will come from private and corporate sources.
- E. Nurture young filmmakers/storytellers in the curriculums of all major universities in Utah. Establish in rural high schools and technical colleges a certificate program to train filmmaking crafts like makeup, scenery design, sound design, editing, etc. so that Utah could have the trained workforce to support more filmmaking in Utah without filmmakers having to import these industry experts from elsewhere.

AGENDA FOR TODAY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nuovo Film Festival, Inc. (NFFI), a Utah-based nonprofit dedicated to fostering innovative storytelling and film development, respectfully requests \$2,000,000 in immediate funding. Please note that the name of the nonprofit may change as its plans have evolved from what was originally a Sundance-replacement festival to more of a forward-looking film/storytelling ecosystem effort in the wake of the initial announcement of the departure of the Sundance Film Festival in March of 2025.

With the Sundance Film Festival relocating to Boulder, Colorado, beginning in 2027, this funding request is an effort to sustain and develop the state's creative industries. NFFI proposes to utilize these resources to hire a dedicated Film Development Director and launch a 12-month initiative to position Utah as a global leader in next-generation filmmaking, integrating AI and emerging technologies.

This proposal aligns directly with the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity's mission and new Creative Economy Initiative to enhance Utah's creative economy, increase tourism, and drive film production. The film and television production industry contributes approximately \$500 million annually to Utah's economy and supports over 4,000 jobs statewide. By partnering on this initiative, we can build a resilient, forward-looking film ecosystem that honors Utah's legacy—exemplified by Robert Redford's foundational contributions—while embracing innovation through collaborations with Silicon Slopes, Utah universities, the Nucleus Institute, and other industry partners.



Kelly Akins <kakins@utah.gov>

GOEO Board Meeting - 1.8.26

Kelly Akins <kakins@utah.gov>
To: Scott Anderson <Scott.Anderson@zionsbank.com>

Wed, Jan 7, 2026 at 2:05 PM

Thank you, Scott. I have received your updated slides (which also came to me today from Lance and Dan) which I will share during tomorrow's meeting.

Thanks again,
Kelly

On Wed, Jan 7, 2026 at 1:21 PM Scott Anderson <Scott.Anderson@zionsbank.com> wrote:

Here is the final slide deck for my presentation. Thanks. Scott

From: Kelly Akins <kakins@utah.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 7, 2026 11:24 AM
To: Scott Anderson <Scott.Anderson@zionsbank.com>
Subject: Re: GOEO Board Meeting - 1.8.26

Of course, Scott!

Great, thanks for letting me know about the updated slide deck you'll be sending later today. I'll use that version when I receive it.

Thanks again,

Kelly

On Wed, Jan 7, 2026 at 10:53 AM Scott Anderson <Scott.Anderson@zionsbank.com> wrote:

Thank you so much. I will get you an update slide deck later today that I will be using. I am shortening and editing the draft deck that Dan gave Lance last night. Thanks. Scott

From: Kelly Akins <kakins@utah.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 7, 2026 10:46 AM
To: Scott Anderson <Scott.Anderson@zionsbank.com>
Cc: Dan Hemmert <dan@hemmco.com>; Lance Soffe <lancesoffe@utah.gov>
Subject: GOEO Board Meeting - 1.8.26

Hello Scott,

We look forward to having you at tomorrow's GOEO Board meeting to present NFFI's proposal for funding. Lance Soffe forwarded me the attached presentation slide deck, which I will have ready to share from my computer when it

APPENDIX

BACKGROUND & OPPORTUNITY

Utah has long been a cornerstone of independent film, thanks in large part to the Sundance Institute and the late Robert Redford, whose vision transformed the state into a hub for storytelling and artistic innovation. During its tenure in Utah, the Sundance Film Festival generated an estimated \$180-200 million in direct and indirect economic impact annually, attracting over 120,000 attendees and generating substantial revenue for hospitality, retail, and service sectors throughout the Wasatch Front and Summit County.

The recent departure of the Sundance Film Festival presents both a challenge and an opportunity to reimagine Utah's role in the industry. With the festival's relocation, NFFI proposes directing \$2 million to proactive investments that will generate sustained economic impact, including job creation, tourism, and attraction of "Made in America" productions eligible for federal incentives (such as expanded deductions under Section 181 of the Internal Revenue Code).

Film productions utilizing Utah's diverse landscapes and infrastructure have historically generated a 4:1 return on investment in state tax incentives, with each dollar in incentives generating approximately \$4 in economic activity. Our initiative aims to leverage this multiplier effect while positioning Utah at the forefront of technological innovation in filmmaking.

NFFI, as a Utah nonprofit with a distinguished board committed to film and creative advancement, is uniquely positioned to steward this transition. Our initiative will complement the Utah Film Commission's efforts and amplify the state's Creative Economy goals by fostering partnerships across technology, education, and finance.

PROPOSED USE OF FUNDS

12 Month Milestone

The requested \$2 million will fund the immediate hiring of a Film Development Director (salary and benefits: approximately \$200,000–\$250,000 annually, including recruitment). This director will lead the following milestones over the next 12 months:

1. **Develop a comprehensive plan for Utah's film ecosystem** focused on storytelling innovation using AI and emerging technologies/platforms, in partnership with Silicon Slopes, Utah's tech community, and university film programs.
2. **Develop and execute a plan for sustained long-term film creation (on all platforms) for the next generation of storytellers** by partnering with existing organizations or building de novo director and screenwriting labs along with other year-round programming in Utah, ensuring continued creative development activities that benefit local filmmakers and generate estimated annual economic impact of \$15-20 million.
3. **Create a partnership with the Harbor Fund** for an annual event connecting filmmakers and financiers, attracting capital investment to Utah-based productions.
4. **Identify and secure a dedicated facility** (e.g., a makerspace with creation spaces and screening rooms) that could serve as a year-round hub for Utah's filmmaking community in the short term.

PROPOSED USE OF FUNDS

Continued

5. **Plan for a larger campus development** (e.g., at Convergence Hall at the Point, in partnership with the Nucleus Institute) including a first-of-its-kind AI-supported soundstage, projected to attract 8-12 major productions annually and create 200+ permanent jobs.
6. **Develop strategies to leverage current federal "Made in America" production incentives**, potentially attracting \$50-100 million in annual production spending to Utah.
7. **Promote filmmaking, screenwriting, and talent development throughout Utah**, with programming reaching rural and underserved communities.
8. **Support and honor Robert Redford's legacy in Utah** through endowment contributions, operational support, and facility development that honors Robert Redford's vision of nurturing independent storytellers and fostering artistic innovation across all seasons.

These milestones will be 1) tracked with quarterly reports to the Governor's Office, 2) NFFI would like the Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity to appoint one of the board members of NFFI, and 3) NFFI intends to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Utah Film Commission to ensure cooperation and collaboration without duplicating efforts across organizations.

SAMPLE BUDGET

12 Month Period

CATEGORY	AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION
Film Development Director Salary & Benefits	\$250,000	Competitive compensation, recruitment, and support staff
Planning & Ecosystem Development	\$150,000	Research, consultations, strategic plan creation
Partnership Development (e.g., Harbor Fund)	\$400,000	Negotiations, event planning, legal/travel expenses, direct financial support for year-round activities and programming
Facility Identification & Planning	\$100,000	Site evaluations, feasibility studies
Promotion & Education Programs	\$200,000	Workshops, grants, marketing
Robert Redford Memorial	\$750,000	Endowment contribution, operational support for labs and artist development programs, facility development, and community
Federal Incentives Research & Outreach	\$50,000	Legal/analysis support, production attraction
Administrative & Operational Costs	\$50,000	Office, travel, reporting
Contingency	\$50,000	Unforeseen expenses
Total	\$2,000,000	

ECONOMIC IMPACT PROJECTIONS

Based on comparable film ecosystem investments in other states, NFFI's 12-month initiative is projected to generate over the next 5 years:

- **\$8-12 million in direct economic impact** through facility development, productions attracted, and program activities
- **Creation of 50-75 new jobs** in film production, technology integration, and creative services
- **Attraction of 3-5 major productions** in year one, generating \$15-25 million in production spending
- **Foundation for \$200+ million in annual economic impact** by year five through sustained production activity and year-round programming
- **Tourism increase of 10-15%** in designated film districts through cultural programming and facility activations

PARTNERSHIP & IMPACT

NFFI seeks a close partnership with the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity, Office of Tourism, and Utah Film Commission under the new Creative Economy Initiative. This investment will create jobs, attract productions, boost tourism, and establish Utah as the summit of film in the AI era while honoring Robert Redford's legacy through sustained support for the artistic development and independent storytelling he championed throughout his life.

By investing in year-round programming, we ensure that Robert Redford's vision continues to empower the next generation of filmmakers, writers, and artists—a living legacy that generates both cultural enrichment and measurable economic benefit for all Utahns.

Thank you for considering this proposal. We welcome the opportunity to discuss further.

Sincerely,
Board of Directors
Nuovo Film Festival, Inc.

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Filmgoers are starved for new ideas, voices and visions. The technology available for filmmaking now is incredible, but I am a big believer that it's all in the story.”

Robert Redford