Official Friend of Sundance Film Festival

Local Business FAQ Guide

Important Notice Regarding Program Scope:
Status as an “Official Friend of the Sundance Film Festival” is in recognition of your valued support of the Sundance Film Festival and Sundance Institute. However, please understand that becoming an Official Friend of Sundance Film Festival does not grant you any rights or authorization to seek outside financial sponsorships, host, or conduct outdoor pop-up brand activations or installations for another unofficial brand or vendor in the exclusive sponsor categories listed below:

- *Example: A local restaurant is welcome to have a pop-up activation with their own food for others to purchase, but agree not to feature an unofficial, conflicting brand.*

Last Date to Apply for the Official Friends Program: Thursday, January 7th, 2027

General Eligibility Guidelines

- Exclusive Sponsor Categories
    - **Automotive**: All dealerships, used car shops, camper van shops, etc.
    - **Financial & Technology**: All banks, online file hosting, and telecom.
    - **Hospitality & Rideshare**: All private home rentals and standard rideshare services.
    - **Regulated Goods**: All tobacco, pharmaceuticals, energy drinks, kombucha, soft drinks, and national water companies.
    - **Religion & Politics**: Formal religious organizations and political organizations.
- Open Categories with Sundance Institute Approval
    - **Food & Dining**: All non-fast-food restaurants, grocery stores, catering, food halls, food trucks (local), specialty markets, bakeries, and ice cream.
    - **Beverages**: All coffee/tea cafes, tea houses, and animal cafes.
    - **Local Hotels, Services & Events**: All hotels, local trade services, printing services, event planners, event spaces, local adventure companies, non-profits, museums, libraries, music producers, and local production studios/photographers.
    - **Professional & Advisor**: Local insurance, local real estate, local wealth advisors, and local marketing/PR/creative agencies.
    - **Healthcare & Medical**: Local hospitals, physical therapy, med spas, dermatologists/dentists, holistic medicine, and sports medicine labs.
    - **Health & Wellness**: Local independent gyms, local yoga/pilates studios, local spas/salons, local IV bars, local massage studios, and local therapy practices.
    - **Local Art, Education, and Nature**: Local art galleries, education programs, adoption programs, summer camps, linguistic programs, florists, garden centers, nature care, pet boutiques, and veterinarians.
- Categories with Specific Classifications
    - **Alcohol & Nightlife**
        - Approved: Local, small breweries, distilleries, tasting rooms, and wineries.
        - Not Approved: National craft breweries, distilleries, tasting rooms, wineries, and single-brand liquor promotions.
    - **Clothing, Accessories, and Jewelry**
        - Approved: All that sell multiple brands. Local, small brands.
        - Not Approved: National, large-scale brands.
    - **Fragrance**
        - Approved: All that sell multiple brands.
        - Not Approved: National, large-scale brands.

Updated by the Sundance Institute as of October 19, 2026

Program Eligibility & General Participation

What does a one-year commitment entail, and how do renewals work?
Participation in the Official Friend Program is an annual commitment tied to the specific Festival year (e.g., 2027 Sundance Film Festival) and Festival timing (January 21-31, 2027). At the conclusion of each Festival, the program is evaluated, and businesses have the opportunity to renew for subsequent years.

Can our business participate if we already have non-Festival events or non-profit partnerships booked during the Festival dates?
Yes. Pre-existing events or partnerships (such as hosting local non-profits) do not disqualify you from joining the program. However, these events must not be marketed as affiliated with the Sundance Film Festival or Sundance Institute. We encourage any non-profit partners hosting events in your space to apply for the Official Friends Program as well.

We want to maintain our normal operating hours and only host private events on a limited basis. Is this program right for us?
Yes. Joining the Official Friend Program does not entail giving up control of your venue or schedule. You retain full control over when and how you make your space available. If you decide to rent out your space for a private party during the Festival, we simply ask that you notify us and ensure the client complies with program guidelines regarding branding and affiliation.

Venue Rentals, Private Events & Non-Festival Bookings

Can we rent our space to non-affiliated businesses or host standard private events (e.g., holiday parties, private dinners) during the Festival dates?
Yes. You may continue to rent your space to non-affiliated third parties or private guests provided the event is not marketed or promoted as affiliated with the Sundance Film Festival or Sundance Institute.

To maintain program integrity, venue owners who are part of the Official Friends Program agree to include a clause in their client agreements stating that private events during the Festival window must not feature unauthorized branding or imply Sundance Film Festival affiliation.

Are we allowed to rent our venue to independent filmmakers or producers once film selections are announced in late December?
Yes. Renting your space to official Sundance Film Festival filmmakers, producers, or cast teams is permitted and encouraged. The list of films within the program will be released to the public, our partners/sponsors, and Official Friends in early/mid December with no exceptions.

How do we vet event inquiries to confirm if a prospective client is an official Festival sponsor?
If you receive an inquiry and are unsure of the client's official status, please email us directly at friendsofthefestival@sundance.org. Because sponsor lists are finalized leading up to the Festival, our team will review the inquiry and confirm their status for you.

What are the guidelines around hosting events (e.g., author talks, panels, screenings) during the Festival window?
To avoid counter-programming that competes with Sundance Film Festival events, any planned public programming (talks, panels, screenings) hosted during the Festival dates must be shared with the Sundance Institute Corporate Partnerships Team for review. If an event takes place outside the Festival footprint or is entirely unassociated with the Festival and not marketed as affiliated, it typically does not present a conflict.

How can local venues submit their space to host official sponsor or filmmaker events?
You can submit your venue details through the "Lease Your Existing Space" form available on the Sundance Film Festival Partner Hub via the Boulder Chamber. Venue profiles are shared with the Festival team and sponsors looking for space. As films are not invited and announced until early/mid December, many artists, teams and companies will not be booking their events until they are confirmed to attend the Festival. Most will be booking in December and January.
Please note: Submitting your space does not guarantee a booking.

Exclusivity & Corporate Sponsorships

How does category exclusivity work for Official Friends, and does it apply year-round?
Category exclusivity applies only during the 10 days of the Festival window, not year-round. It is important to note that this is a Community Program and *not a Corporate Sponsorship Tier.*

- Existing Year-Round Sponsors: If your business has existing sponsors or partners that compete with our official Corporate Sponsors, that is acceptable, provided those sponsors do not execute Sundance Film Festival activations or branding during the Festival period.
- Local Retailers & Restaurants: Having an exclusive sponsor in a specific category does not always prevent local businesses (such as sports bars, breweries, or restaurants) from joining the program. If you have any questions on eligibility, please feel free to contact us.

Where can we view the current list of official Festival sponsors?
Our partner roster evolves each year. You can view the previous year's confirmed partners on our official website. Updated sponsor lists for the upcoming Festival are finalized and published annually on the website in the fall.

Vendor, Hospitality & Culinary Opportunities

Are there opportunities for mobile vendors, pop-up booths, or outdoor installations?
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Those that come to Boulder to benefit from this Festival environment and community without financially supporting the Festival do not further our mission of supporting artists. This is why the Official Friend of Sundance Film Festival membership requires that you work with our Official Sponsors only when hosting a Festival-related event. You can inquire for more information about specific sponsors by contacting friendsofthefestival@sundance.org. Broader activation rights are reserved strictly for Corporate Sponsors and Partners.

How can local businesses get involved beyond standard membership?
Businesses offering high-quality goods or services can explore becoming an Official Provider:

- Official Provider Status: Local businesses able to provide essential goods or services (typically at a minimum $5,000 value) may qualify to support the Festival as an Official Provider.
- How to Apply: Submit an inquiry via the Sundance Institute Corporate Partnerships Interest Form.