

Film Grants Fuel Strong Film Production Start In 2021th Carolina

By Administrator

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After pressing pause in 2020, film production has resumed in North Carolina with six recent grant recipients. With production levels at a six-year high so far this year, the latest productions to be announced as North Carolina Film and Entertainment Grant recipients will have a combined spend of more than \$134.8 million in the state while creating in excess of 5,700 job opportunities, including 1,681 well-paying crew positions for the state's highly skilled film professionals.

"The film industry has been able to safely resume production and we are pleased to see more productions coming to our state," said Governor Roy Cooper. "Film activity provides good jobs and opportunities for local businesses, while also providing a compelling global showcase for North Carolina and its abundant natural beauty."

LD Entertainment, whose N.C.-filmed production "Words on Bathroom Walls" was recently released, returns to the Tar Heel State with a new feature-length film "I.S.S." The thriller features six astronauts living aboard the International Space Station (ISS) and follows their actions after receiving distressing information from Earth that threatens their missions and their lives. Filmed in Wilmington at EUE/Screen Gems Studios, this project has been approved for a rebate up to \$3.6 million.

The second grantee, which has been approved for a rebate of up to \$8 million, is the Lionsgate Television series "This Country." The series is set to air on FOX, and recently wrapped filming with location shoots taking place throughout New Hanover and Pender counties.

Blumhouse Entertainment also returns to the state with the feature "Static", a story about a young boy who fights to escape the clutches of a serial killer with the help of past victims through a magic phone. The production is approved for a rebate up to \$4.7 million after filming in New Hanover, Brunswick, and Columbus counties.

Also returning to the state for filming is Lionsgate's project "Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret," a film based on Judy Blume's best-selling novel. Production begins this Spring in the greater Charlotte area and has been approved for a grant rebate up to \$7 million.

Finally, the Charlotte area is the backdrop for the independent feature "Evolution". Approved for a film rebate of up to \$3 million, the feature tells the story of a mom determined to find a way forward for her family when her daredevil teenage son suffers a freak accident, finding hope from the most unexpected source.

In addition to the five projects currently in production or that recently completed production, a grant award has also been extended to another Blumhouse feature-film production. This yet-to-be-named project has been approved for a grant of up to \$7 million and will begin production in the second half of 2021 after being pushed from 2020 due to COVID-19.

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“Despite some setbacks last year, it’s great to see filming in the state finish strong in 2020 with projects to help kickstart what is expected to be a very successful 2021,” added North Carolina Film Office director Guy Gaster. “As our film professionals follow proper safety protocols and guidance, the industry is able to help create substantial economic opportunities in the communities in which they film.”

In addition to the announced grant recipients, production continues with two other grantees, “Virginia Cold Case” and the second season of the television series “Hightown”, and recently wrapped on grant-receiving series “Delilah”. Several non-grant recipient productions for national commercials and reality series as well as work done by local filmmakers have also been taking place since the industry’s restart.

The North Carolina Film and Entertainment Grant provides financial assistance to attract feature film and television productions that will stimulate economic activity and create jobs in the state. Production companies receive no money up front and must meet direct in-state spending requirements to qualify for grant funds. The program is administered by the North Carolina Department of Commerce and promoted by the North Carolina Film Office, part of VisitNC and the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina.