

Screenwriting Contests Calendar Dates and Prizes

Screenwriting contests winners can have an advantage when pursuing a screenwriting career. Even acing high in one can help. But which screenwriting contest fits your specific needs? Below is a breakdown of screenwriting contests calendar dates and prizes to help you create a strategy for entering writing contests.

What factors matter most in screenwriting contest prizes?

We all can use some extra money, but if you're looking for a real shot at a career as a screenwriter, you need exposure in the filmmaking industry too. But not all screenwriting contests can get your script read by Hollywood executives, agents and managers.

What if you're just starting out and looking for validation or a mentor? Then you might want to look for screenwriting contests that have some sort of learning aspect to them.

If you're an aspiring TV writer, then a fellowship is a valuable feather in your cap to get a regular writing gig on a TV show.

Let's break down a screenwriting contests list based on prizes to help you decide which is worth your time and money. You'll see writing contests listed in the category that's the most appropriate, although they might also apply to multiple categories.

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*NOTE: Submissions are open for a range of time, but the longer you wait to submit, the more it will cost you. Plus, the more tired readers will be. A good tip is to submit early!

MENTORSHIP + EXPOSURE PRIZE:

A prize of a mentor can be more valuable than any amount of money. Here are two screenwriting contests from The Writers Store that offer full mentorship during the process of writing your script.

Industry Insider Television Writing Contest: Industry Insider is a one-of-a-kind competition from our sister site, The Writers Store, that enters all of the top 10 finalists into our [ScriptXpert Story Specialists mentoring program](#), where they will polish their pilot and create a Show Bible. A panel of judges then reads all the finalists' scripts and chooses a winner for a meeting with an industry professional (this year it's AMC (*Mad Men*, *Into the Badlands*)).

Submissions Open: February to June – [check the site for exact dates and costs.](#)

Industry Insider Screenwriting Contest: Working from this A-list logline, this screenwriting contest challenges you to create the first 15 pages of an original script based on the given concept. Make it your own – drama, action, comedy – anywhere your imagination takes you. Past loglines have been provided by Judd Payne, Randall Wallace, Susannah Grant, Edward Saxon and more.

Each of the 10 finalists receives a copy of Movie Magic Screenwriter to professionally format their work as they enter into a 12-week ScriptXpert Scriptwriting Coaching mentoring program, consisting of feedback for every 10 pages submitted, with the goal of completing a spec screenplay based on the given logline. After the initial mentoring portion, the finalists submit their rough drafts to professional script readers for

comprehensive ScriptXpert Screenplay Coverage, and then have two more weeks to work with their screenwriting mentor to complete the final draft of their screenplay for judging. The winning script is selected by the industry executive who created the logline.

Submissions Open: January to April – check the site for exact dates and costs.

EXPOSURE PRIZE:

A high placement in the following screenwriting contests will guarantee your script hits the desks of screenwriting agents and managers. You can't get a script optioned unless you can get it read. A prize money can't buy.

Academy Nicholl Fellowships: Up to five fellowships are offered, valued at \$35,000 each. "Fellowship winners are invited to participate in awards week ceremonies and seminars and expected to complete at least one original feature film screenplay during the Fellowship year."

Submissions Open: March to early May – check the site for exact dates and costs.

Access Screenplay Contest: The Access Screenplay Contest was founded with the express goal of discovering new talent and connecting those emerging writers with industry decision makers. Each semifinalist (Feature Film, TV Pilot, Web Series, Short Film) will earn a spot in our Logline Directory, sent to over 100 Industry Executives. They will also receive a mention on the *Script Magazine* site. Each finalist will have a Skype or phone meeting with our judges. They will also receive a highlighted mention on *Script*, as well as the [Roadmap Writers](#) Screenwriting Intensive Package. The grand prize winner in each category will receive a \$1,000 cash prize, meetings with Industry Execs who specialize in their category, travel and accommodations for these meetings, and the Roadmap Writers Screenwriting Intensive Package.

Submissions Open: February to May – check the site for exact dates and costs.

Austin Film Festival: AFF is the ultimate screenwriters' conference. All contest Second Rounders, Semifinalists, and Finalists get a substantial discount to the annual conference with a badge clearly marking their status in the writing contest, plus exclusive access to special panels and events. AFF is *the* networking event for screenwriters and independent filmmakers alike.

Submissions Open: Mid-April to Mid-May – check the site for exact dates and costs.

Tracking Board's Feature and Pilot Launch Pad Competitions: The Tracking Board competition focuses on launching a writer's career in that they match the scripts of their screenwriting competition's semifinalist and finalist writers with executives looking for similar material. They also take it a step farther and share not just the project you submitted but also loglines of other scripts you have in the works. This is not one of those meaningless contests that simply ends up on your resume and then dies on the vine. Your work will get in the hands of all the top executives, agents and managers in the business. Stay tuned for a Manuscript Launch Pad too!

Submissions Open for Pilot Competition: January to early April

Submissions Open for Features Competition: June to August
Check the site for exact dates and costs.

TrackingB.com: Another exposure contest is TrackingB. Described on their site: "Five finalists will be promoted on trackingb.com to our community of entertainment industry insiders AND will also be read by each member of our esteemed judging panel who will pick an overall winner." That's a lot of eyes on a script.

Submissions Open: January to March – check the site for exact dates and costs.

Finish Line Script Competition: This is the first year of this contest, so there is no track record yet, but the new angle it's taking is worth mentioning. "The Grand Prize winner will have their script sent to any actor, director, producer or studio of their choice. Anyone at all. We guarantee that person will receive your script for consideration but we cannot guarantee they will pursue it further. We want to help you get access and we will back the winner to that degree. The Grand Prize winner will either meet in person, Skype or speak via phone to up to 15 industry professionals ranging from literary managers, agents, development execs and producers." Other prizes for this inaugural screenwriting contest are listed on their site too, including \$1500 to the Grand Prize Winner.

Submissions Open: February to August with a chance to resubmit your script after addressing feedback notes from their readers. – [Check the site for exact dates and costs.](#)

FELLOWSHIPS:

Contests that offer fellowships are a great way to not only get attention but also to learn. Beyond learning, the connections you make with the other fellowship winners will grow your network even wider.

WGA site has a great list of programs to check out further:
[Industry Diversity Writing Programs, Conferences and Festivals](#)

The following are fellowships broken up into Features and TV.

Features:

Academy Nicholl Fellowships: No question, this screenwriting fellowship is the brass ring, which is why we're listing it again. During your year-long fellowship, you are required to complete at least one original feature film screenplay.

Submissions Open: March to early May – [check the site for exact dates and costs.](#)

Film Independent Screenwriting Lab: "An intensive four-week workshop that meets two to three evenings a week in Los Angeles every September, the Film Independent Screenwriting Lab is designed to facilitate each writer's unique voice through the development of a single feature project."

Submissions Open: February to April – [check the site for exact dates and costs.](#)

ScreenCraft Fellowship: The recipients receive ongoing professional support and a trip to L.A. for meetings with key entertainment executives, producers and representatives.

Submission Deadline is December/January – [check the site for details and costs.](#)

Sundance Screenwriting Lab: 12 screenwriters are chosen to participate in this prestigious lab in Utah. The relationships built during this intense week can be life-changing.

Submission Deadline is May 1st – [check the site for details of eligibility and costs.](#)

TV Fellowships:

Click the links below to find the submission details.

[CBS Diversity Institute/Writers Mentoring Program](#)
[FOX Writer's Intensive](#) (by referral only)

HBOAccess Writing Fellowship
NBC Writers on the Verge
Nickelodeon Writing Fellowship
Sundance Episodic Lab
Walt Disney Studios and ABC Entertainment Writing Fellowship
Warner Brothers Television Workshop

MONEY PRIZE:

Who doesn't want a big, fat check for their efforts? Some of the contests listed below offer more than just money, so read on...

BlueCat Screenplay Competition: This screenwriting contest is open to TV pilots, features and short film scripts. Prizes range from \$2,000 to \$15,000. One unique aspect of BlueCat is you can resubmit your script after addressing feedback notes from their readers.

Submissions Open: September to December – check the site for exact dates and costs.

Final Draft Big Break: 11 Feature Genre and TV Format Winners share over \$80,000 in cash and prizes, including The Final Draft/New York Film Academy Fellowship in Writing for Film & Television. The two Grand Prize winners are flown to L.A. for meetings.

Submissions Open: February to July – check the site for exact dates and costs.

PAGE International Screenwriting Awards: This contest offers 31 awards, breaking them down to Gold, Silver and Bronze winners in 10 different genre categories. The prizes range from \$250 to \$25,000, including smaller prizes of promotional services and gift certificates. Features, short films, and original TV pilots are all eligible for submission.

Submissions Open: Mid-January to Mid-April – check the site for exact dates and costs.

ScreenCraft Contests: ScreenCraft has writing contests for a wide variety of genres for cash prizes. Note above that ScreenCraft also has a fellowship.

Submissions Open: Their site has a full list of contests and deadlines.

Scriptapalooza: Prizes range from \$500 to \$10,000 including smaller prizes of subscriptions and software. Scriptapalooza also will "promote, pitch and push" their Semifinalists and above for an entire year to their network of executives, producers, managers and agents.

Submissions Open: January to April – check the site for exact dates and costs.

Script Pipeline: Prizes range from special invitations to private networking events to \$25,000. They have separate features and TV contests that run at the same time.

Submissions Open: March to May – check the site for exact dates and costs.

Slamdance: Prizes range from merchandise to \$5000. The contest is open for feature screenplays, short film scripts, and original TV pilots.

Submissions Open: February to July – check the site for exact date and costs.

***Contests listed on this page are not endorsed by Script magazine.
It's up to writers to do their own research and decide which contest fits their needs and budget.**