



## **FILM READY NEW JERSEY REQUIREMENTS**

The Film Ready New Jersey certification (“Film Ready”) is a 5-step program that educates, trains, and certifies New Jersey municipalities, counties and other local governing units (“Locality(ies)”) regarding film production best practices within a Locality. A Locality may be certified as Film Ready if, for the purpose of maintaining consistency throughout the State, the Locality agrees to abide by all of the Film Ready program requirements as provided below (the “Requirements”). Film Ready is a designation by the New Jersey Motion Picture and Television Commission (NJMP TVC).

### **A. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA & APPLICATION PROCESS**

All Localities are eligible to participate in the 5-step Film Ready program to be Film Ready certified. The following steps must be completed to qualify for Film Ready designation:

1. **Attend a “How to Become a Film Ready Locality” Workshop**
  - a. During this event, representatives of municipal and county governments will receive training and guidance from industry professionals, local mayors and NJMP TVC Commissioners and staff, and learn about the economic impact of hosting on-location filming, ordinances and permitting, industry standards and best practices and public safety. Participants will walk away with a toolkit to attract and welcome productions to their community and learn about the necessary steps required to become a certified Film Ready Locality.
  - b. This workshop is offered in-person. Attendance is free, and meetings are held multiple times throughout the year at various rotating locations.
2. **Designate a Film Ready liaison**
  - a. The designated liaison must be employed by a division of the city or county’s local government and be a skilled and knowledgeable official.
    - i. in the event of a change in the liaison, the locality must notify the NJMP TVC within 10 business days.
3. **Adopt a formal permit process**
  - a. Either:
    - i. pass a film ordinance that adheres to these Requirements found in section C, or;
    - ii. adopt administratively enforceable guidelines, such as a Code of Conduct.
4. **Upload filming locations to Reel Scout**
  - a. Upload at least eight (8) locations to the NJMP TVC's Location Library representing your Locality, with a minimum of five (5) photographs per location exterior and, to the extent that the location has interior space, a minimum of four (4) photographs per room of interior space.
5. **Submit a list of local resources**
  - a. Submit at least five (5) current local production resources, including, but not limited to, businesses or services of use to a film or TV project such as: catering, restaurants, coffee



shops, bakeries, drug stores, lodging, construction supplies (hardware), heavy access equipment suppliers, car and truck rental, gas stations/auto repair, renewable diesel & EV charging stations, dry cleaning, consignment shop (props/wardrobe), clothing stores, office supplies and security services. A comprehensive list of ancillary categories can be found here: [NJ411 Vendor Listings](#) (click the drop-down menu under “Categories.” The local resources will not be required to be utilized by the production team but rather shall serve as a resource reference for the production teams.

6. If a Locality has completed the requirements of the Film Ready New Jersey program and would like to apply for official certification, the final application can be found here: [New Jersey Motion Picture & Television Commission - Certification Application](#).

## **B. CERTIFICATION PROCESS AND REVIEW**

1. *Sign up* – after attending the Workshop, Localities are invited to sign up on the spot to continue with certification next steps. Participants are then directed to scan a QR code to schedule a one-on-one Teams session with the Film Ready team, at which time they will receive credentials to access the Reel-Scout software to upload locations into the location library, as well as further guidance and support to become a certified Film Ready Locality.
2. *One-on-one follow up* – immediately following the one-on-one session with the Locality, an e-mail summarizing the meeting is sent with certification steps and links, credentials to access Reel-Scout, certification application submission deadline and any personalized information discussed, including feedback to any proposed or existing ordinance. NJMPTVC staffers and interns may, as NJMPTVC time and resources allow, assist a town with photographing their community and appointments are scheduled based upon availability. To complete the one-on-one session, the Locality must provide a copy of any existing ordinance or code of conduct. Prior to being certified as a Film Ready Locality, a town must have enacted an ordinance or code of conduct with content that complies with the requirements detailed further in Section C, subsection 2 below.
3. *Deadline* - localities embarking upon the certification process will have 90 days from the date of the Workshop attended to complete the requirements of the program.
4. *Application Review*
  - a. Verification that all certification requirements have been submitted using the certification application include:
    - i. Completed certification application.
    - ii. Eight (8) new locations to the NJMPTVC’s Location Library representing your locality, with a minimum of five (5) photographs per location exterior and, to the extent that the location has interior space, a minimum of four (4) photographs per room of interior space.
      1. A Localities’ locations are reviewed to ensure historical locations and newly submitted locations have at least nine (9) current and



- accompanying images. Public description, contact information, categories, styles, tags, and keywords must also be reviewed and/or added before a location is approved.
- iii. Copy of the Locality's film ordinance or Code of Conduct
    1. Ordinances are reviewed thoroughly for language that promotes media production in a way which is both mutually beneficial for residents and industry professionals, which includes filming fees (as outlined in the attached fee schedule) and built-in waiver policies.
  - iv. Five (5) local resources
    1. Production services are reviewed to verify that at least five (5) local resources have been submitted for the community seeking film-ready status.
  - v. Electronic copy of the Municipal seal/logo and authorization for the NJMPTVC to use the seal/logo in marketing materials and/or on their website.
  - vi. Statement of support from municipal representative regarding your community's completion of the Film Ready New Jersey Program and support of film + television production.
- b. Localities with an incomplete requirement(s) will be notified with specific details and guidance to remedy any outstanding issues and will remain pending until said issues are resolved.
5. *Application Approval* - once all requirements have been completed, the NJMPTVC issues a certification letter to the mayor of the Film Ready Locality.

### **C. ORDINANCE, CODE OF CONDUCT & FEES**

1. Prior to being certified as a Film Ready Locality, a town must have enacted a *film ordinance* (which lists a fee schedule) or a *Code of Conduct* (a resolution that lists no fees but outlines the Locality's expectations of the production and complies with the below requirements) by its governing body. Examples of both can be found on the NJMPTVC's website.
  - a. If a Locality decides to adopt a Code of Conduct instead of an ordinance, the Code of Conduct shall include:
    - i. no less than/no greater than language added when applied to noise restrictions, hours of filming (no earlier than 7:00am to 9:00pm "camera wrap" and crew wrap at 10:00pm) for Projects with exterior filming, or greater intrusion,
    - ii. information concerning where production vehicles can be parked.
    - iii. Signage as required by the public safety plan, local police department, or state law alerting the public and crew for parking locations, base camp and cast and crew holding zones.
    - iv. Permissible and non-permissible changes to landscaping and/or building facades.
    - v. Noise and lighting regulations for residential areas (especially night filming).



- vi. Where equipment can and cannot be stored.
  - vii. Sanitation and proper trash disposal.
  - viii. Pedestrian access to public property, residences and businesses.
2. If a Locality decides to adopt a film ordinance, or amend an existing ordinance, said ordinance must comply with the requirements below in order for the ordinance to be approved as part of the Film Ready certification:
  - a. Fees (see sections 3-9 below).
  - b. Film permit application process (see section 10 below).
  - c. Blanket waivers (see section 11 below).
  - d. Where permits are required (see section 12 below).
  - e. Notice of filming (see section 13 below).
  - f. Permit periods (see section 14 below).
  - g. Additional permits required (see section 15 below).
  - h. Modifications to the ordinance (see section 16 below).
  - i. Bond requirements (see section 17 below).
  - j. Communication with the NJMPTVC (see section D below).
3. The amounts listed in the Film Ready Fee Schedule are the maximum allowed amount for each fee category to be certified . A Film Ready Locality may, however, assess lesser amounts for a given fee category.
4. The NJMPTVC may modify and update the Fee Schedule at its discretion. See Schedule below. A Locality would have to address any changes the NJMPTVC makes in order to maintain their Film Ready status at the time of their next renewal application.
5. A Film Ready Locality may not (a) charge or assess hidden fees to film, television, or digital entertainment projects (“Projects”) or (b) include language permitting or suggesting such hidden fees (i.e.: “at cost”, or “fee TBD by department head”) in any film ordinance or fee schedule related to film or television production. If there is a fee or charge that is not included in the Fee Schedule, the Locality will not charge or add a surcharge that is different than what they would charge any other similar applicant or entity.
  - a. If not covered in the attached Fee Schedule, additional fees for site and equipment/vehicle inspection, and location fees for commercial districts, municipal parks or buildings in use by the public or main vehicular arteries may be proposed by a Locality for inclusion in an ordinance, provided that the Locality provides reasoning as to why these fees are standard and customary and are comparable with similar fees offered by other municipalities.
6. A Film Ready Locality may not charge or assess Film permit fees for filming entirely on private property, provided that said filming causes no disruption to the public’s use or enjoyment of public property or right-of-way. If a production company certifies that filming will be entirely on private property and later alters said agreement, the Locality may elect to either charge a



daily filming fee in accordance with the Fee Schedule and/or assign police personnel at the expense of the production.

7. A Film Ready Locality shall not assess daily filming fees for Projects where the applicant certifies that the Project will not create revenue from public exhibition, such as non-profit or student Projects, among others.
8. A Film Ready Locality shall include, in its Film Ordinance, an allowance for fee waivers at the discretion of the Localities' Film Permit Representative (see section 10 below).
9. Film Ready Localities shall not re-negotiate fees more than the stated fee caps stated in these requirements including, among others, permit fees, inconvenience fees (see section I below), etc., after (a) a fee schedule has been agreed to by the Locality and a production entity and (b) production has begun. Any Film Ready Locality which engages in this practice will (1) have their Film Ready certification revoked and (2) be barred from re-applying to the Film Ready program for a period of one year.
10. "Film Permit Representative": A Film Ready Locality shall appoint a full-time employee of the Locality (typically the city manager or clerk), who will manage the approval of film permits and applications. For the sake of expediency, these duties shall not be administered by a member of the Locality's governing body or its Mayor and will be verified by the NJMPTVC at the time of certification. The Film Permit Representative and the Film Ready Liaison do not need to be the same person.
11. A Film Ready Locality shall include a provision of its film ordinance (in order to operate in a timely fashion), that empowers the Film Permit Representative to have the ability to waive any provision, limitation or restriction of the film ordinance after consultation with any town agency or department significantly impacted by the production crew's operations (i.e.: DPW, Police Chief, etc.) if they determine that (a) strict compliance with such limitations will not impose an unreasonable burden upon the applicant or the Locality and that (b) such a permit may be issued without endangering the public's health, safety and welfare. This function of the Representative shall provide a mechanism for quickly and efficiently addressing unexpected changes in a film or television production's schedule due to inclement weather or other good cause, such as sudden cast illness, loss of access to a location, pandemic, etc.
12. Localities shall state in their film ordinance that municipal film permits shall not be required when filming occurs entirely on county, state or federally-owned properties (i.e.: county parks, courthouses, etc.) when no municipal services are being used (i.e.: parking on public streets, etc.) or public rights-of-way are being obstructed (i.e.: blocked sidewalks or public access) and when the required permit is obtained from the applicable county, state or federal authority.



13. To the extent that a Film Ready Locality provides for notice of filming to businesses and residents in any film ordinance, the provision of such notice shall be limited to, “immediately adjacent residents, businesses and merchants potentially impacted by additional light and/or noise in or where foot and/or vehicular traffic may be impaired.” Inclusion of a notice requirements similar to “notice to all property owners within a [predetermined] radius...” in any film ordinance or Code of Conduct shall result in denial of certification. Notice shall not be required by certified mail, but a Locality may ask that a written, hand-delivered or registered USPS notice be sent to the immediately impacted businesses or residents no greater than three (3) days in advance of the first date of filming, and may ask that proof of service of notice to adjacent residents and businesses be provided to the Film Permit Representative no more than two (2) days prior to the first date of filming.
14. Film Ready Localities shall allow for weekend and night filming (when not in conflict with any pre-existing municipal “Blue Laws” or other applicable existing laws or ordinances), subject to the notice requirement (as noted in #13 above). A Film Ready Locality may include standard filming days and hours for production (“Permit Period(s)”) in their film ordinance, with Permit Periods no less than 7:00am to 9:00pm (camera wrap) and crew wrap at 10:00pm, Monday through Sunday. Night filming restrictions shall only apply to a Project with exterior filming. Film Ready Localities shall include a provision for adjustments and special circumstances agreed upon between the Film Permit Representative and a Project at the time a film permit is approved. Film Ready Localities may not restrict the number of consecutive days nor the total days per calendar year that any one location can be used for filming.
15. An ordinance must include that Projects may, depending on the needs of the sequence they are filming, have to apply for and receive approval from other municipal authorities (i.e.: police, fire, zoning, animal control, department of health, etc.) before a film permit can be issued.
16. Any modifications to a Film Ready Locality’s existing film ordinance, Code of Conduct or Film Fee Schedule must be forwarded, within 10 business days of passage, to the NJMPTVC. The NJMPTVC may deny or revoke certification from a Locality that (a) makes a modification that results in a violation of any of these Requirements or (b) submits its modification outside the required 10 business days.
17. A Film Ready Locality may require, in its ordinance, the posting of a cash or a maintenance bond running in favor of the Locality and protecting and insuring that the location utilized will be left, after filming, in a satisfactory condition, free of debris, rubbish and equipment, and that due observance of all Locality ordinances, laws and regulations will be followed, provided that said bond be no more than \$1,000 and that the Locality returns this bond within no more than 10 days of the completion of filming, if there has been no damage to public property or public expense caused by the filming.



#### **D. COMPLIANCE**

A Film Ready Locality must notify the NJMPTVC by written notice within 10 business days of any change to their film ordinance and/or Code of Conduct. Any Locality found to have altered their ordinance in such a way to be out of alignment with the requirements contained herein will have 90 days to remedy any non-compliance issues with the Film Ready requirements. If, at the end of the 90-day period, the NJMPTVC is not satisfied that the Locality's film ordinance will be brought into compliance with these requirements, a Locality shall have their Film Ready certification revoked and entries in the Location Library no longer marked as "Film Ready."

A Locality may appeal their revocation within 10 business days of the revocation (see Appeals section F).

When a Project is filmed in a Film Ready Locality, that Locality's approved Film Ready liaison shall notify the NJMPTVC (at the Film Ready inbox at [filmreadynj@njeda.gov](mailto:filmreadynj@njeda.gov)), within 10 business days of a project's completion of photography in the Locality, of the following, late notice of which may result in revocation of certification and a review of a locality's Film Ready status:

- a. Name of the Project and production company.
- b. Start and stop dates of physical production in a certified town.
- c. Total number of filming days.
- d. Addresses of filming location(s).

#### **E. CERTIFICATION RENEWAL**

1. A Film Ready Certification shall remain valid for two (2) calendar years and shall expire on the second anniversary date of its issuance. Film Ready Localities may request certification renewal every second anniversary of the issuance, or most recent renewal, of their Film Ready Certification. Current Film Ready Localities shall be required to update their ordinance, Code of Conduct and applicable policies to meet these requirements upon renewal of their certification. Upon receiving a request for renewal, the NJMPTVC shall review the Film Ready Locality for compliance with these Requirements before deciding whether to renew a certification. A Locality shall be considered a pending Locality while their certification is either renewed or denied.
2. Renewal shall consist of:
  - a. Either confirming the Film Ready Liaison is unchanged or submitting the contact information (name, phone and email address) of the new Liaison.
  - b. Confirming that all locations submitted as part of the Film Ready certification have not been altered or demolished in whole or in part. If any alterations have occurred, the Locality must rephotograph and reupload pictures of the property as it currently looks. If any locations have been completely razed, the Locality must photograph and upload a new location to replace it. A Locality will also confirm that any contacts for



private property have not been changed or update the contacts with new names, phone numbers and emails.

- c. Confirming that all businesses listed in the NJ411 have the correct addresses, contact names, phone numbers, email addresses and websites. If any businesses should close between initial certification and renewal, a Locality must find another business to replace said entry in the NJ411.
  - d. Confirming that the film ordinance or Code of Conduct has not changed and is still in compliance with the requirements listed herein.
3. All Film Ready Certifications issued by NJMPTVC prior to the promulgation of these Requirements shall be deemed to have been issued as of the effective date of the issuance of their original certification.

#### **F. APPEALS**

1. Any Locality may protest the denial or revocation of a Film Ready certification by the NJMPTVC.
2. In order for an appeal to be timely, it must be submitted to the Executive Director within 10 business days of receipt of the notification that the Locality was denied a certification or had their certification revoked.
3. In order to be considered complete, a protest must:
  - a. identify the Locality that is submitting the protest,
  - b. identify the subject matter of the appeal,
  - c. specify all grounds for the appeal (including all arguments, materials and/or documents supporting it); and,
  - d. indicate whether an oral presentation is requested, and if so, the reason for the oral presentation.
4. The Executive Director will designate a Hearing Officer. The designated Hearing Officer will review all timely and complete appeals and will have sole discretion to determine if an oral presentation by the Locality is necessary to reach an informed decision on the matter(s) of the protest.
5. After completing his or her review of the appeal, the Hearing Officer will prepare a preliminary report, which shall be advisory in nature and not binding, and send to the Locality. Should the Locality dispute the findings of the preliminary "Hearing Officer Report", it will be afforded an "Exceptions Period" equal to ten (10) business days from the issuance of the preliminary "Hearing Officer Report" to refute the findings of the Hearing Officer.





6. At the expiration of the Exceptions Period, the Hearing Officer will review any “Exceptions to the Hearing Officer’s Report” and finalize his or her report. The Hearing Officer will make a recommendation in his or her final “Hearing Officer Report” to the NJMPTVC’s Board.
7. The NJMPTVC’s Board will review the final “Hearing Officer Report” and the Locality’s “Exceptions to the Hearing Officer’s Report” and shall render a final agency decision regarding the appropriateness of the award.
8. The action of the NJMPTVC’s Board to make a final decision for the certification decision will be a final action that is appealable to the Appellate Division of the Superior Court of New Jersey.

#### **G. PHOTO REQUIREMENTS/NJ REEL-SCOUT LOCATION LIBRARY**

Upon application for Film Ready certification, a Locality shall provide NJMPTVC with photographs highlighting areas within the Locality that are available for filming for inclusion in the NJ Location Photo Library. Each Locality shall provide a minimum of eight locations per town, with a minimum of five photographs per location exterior (resulting in at least a total of 40 photographs) and, to the extent that the location has interior space, a minimum of four photographs per room of interior space. Film Ready Localities are requested to review and, as needed, update their submitted photographs each time they apply for certification renewal (or if a location’s appearance has been significantly altered).

#### **H. VENDOR LISTINGS (NJ411)**

Upon application for Film Ready certification, Localities shall provide: (a) the name of business, (b) contact person, (c) business address, (c) website URL, (d) phone number and (e) business category of no less than five (5) categories of businesses within the Locality that provide goods or services relevant to film and television production (“Vendor(s)”). Favoritism should be avoided and therefore duplication of services is allowable (e.g.: restaurants, gas stations, etc.). Prior to submitting the Vendors to NJMPTVC, Localities shall obtain each Vendors’ consent to be listed in NJMPTVC’s NJ411 directory. Film Ready Localities shall review and update their Vendor submissions each time they apply for certification renewal.

#### **I. INCONVENIENCE FEES**

When a business or private residence is in the background of a camera shot, the Project may offer a per day inconvenience fee to the business or private residence. Compensation is generally not provided to businesses or private residences that are located outside of camera frame and incur no loss of business or inconvenience.



A Film Ready Locality must certify that they will not be involved in the financial negotiations between a private business or residence and a Project. If a business or private residence owner has agreed to an inconvenience fee with a Project, a Film Ready Locality may not re-negotiate the agreed upon fee on the behalf of the business or private residence owner. Any Film Ready Locality credibly reported to have re-negotiated a higher fee between a private property owner and a Project shall be subject to revocation and review of their Film Ready status as per section F above.

## **J. PUBLIC SAFETY**

1. Film Ready Localities shall, in any film ordinance or Code of Conduct, include a provision requiring that prior to any filming, the chief law enforcement officer (police chief) and the chief executive officer (business administrator), or another designated official, of the Locality shall meet with a Project's producer and/or location manager to agree upon a public safety protection plan. During that meeting, the Locality must ask the producers to communicate planned interior and exterior sequences to the Locality so that the relevant municipal departments can be engaged in developing the public safety plan for the project.
2. Film Ready Localities shall not permit filming to begin until a public safety plan has been developed and a public safety services fee agreed upon by the Locality and the production company.
3. Film Ready Localities shall, in any film ordinance or Code of Conduct, include a provision prohibiting the Locality and its municipal departments from utilizing the practice of "feather bedding" as part of its public safety plan for any Project. For the purpose of these requirements, "feather bedding" mean willfully assigning more law enforcement or public safety personnel than is generally considered necessary by public safety experts, for maintaining public safety in the context of the planned filming. Film Ready Localities must take reasonable efforts to avoid featherbedding and utilize standard and reasonable methods for determining the amount of police presence that is required.



## FILM ORDINANCE FEE SCHEDULE

| CATEGORY  | FEE (not to exceed)  |
|---|--|
| Basic filming permit (one-time; with 4 or more days advance notice of the first day of filming)           | \$100  |
| Expedited basic filming permit (one-time; with 3 or less days advance notice of the first day of filming) | \$250  |
| Basic filming permit for nonprofits, including student films (one-time; no daily rate required)           | \$25   |
| <b>Daily filming on public property</b>   |  |
| <i>Film and television projects with a budget under \$20mm</i>  | \$150  |
| <i>Film and television projects with a budget over \$20mm</i>   | \$500  |
| <b>Daily filming on private property</b>  | NO FEE CHARGED BY MUNICIPALITY   |
| <b>Public Safety</b>  |  |
| <i>Hiring of off-duty police and fire inspections, according to agreed upon public safety plan</i>        | The municipality's standard hourly rates for police and fire                       |
| <b>Inconvenience fees</b>   |  |
| <i>Street closures - less than 10,000 residents</i>   | \$1,000  |
| <i>Street closures - more than 10,000 residents</i>   | \$5,000  |
| <i>Properties in background - or used - in shot</i>   | Fee is negotiated between a production company and a private business or residence |
| <i>Daily prep of business that is being "dressed"</i>   | Fee is negotiated between a production company and a private business              |
| <i>Daily filming of business that is "dressed"</i>  | Fee is negotiated between a production company and a private business              |
| <b>Parking fees</b>   | Same rates that are charged to the public  |