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BLACK PUBLIC MEDIA ISSUES OPEN CALL FOR ITS 10TH PITCHBLACK

Selected applicants will win an opportunity to compete in PitchBLACK, where the winner will receive a prize of \$150,000 in production funding

NEW YORK (September 2, 2026)—[Black Public Media](#) has opened its submissions portal to its [2026 Open Call](#). Independent filmmakers are invited to submit feature-length nonfiction projects in a range of formats, styles, subject matter and genres for the opportunity next spring to participate in the 10th [PitchBLACK Forum & Awards](#) — the nation's largest pitch competition for independent filmmakers who create Black content. Those selected to participate will receive \$20,000 to support their project. The winning project will receive an additional \$150,000 production award.

BPM is particularly interested in stories that explore critical issues, promote cultural understanding and engage national audiences and/or local communities. All projects — which may be in pre-production, production or early post-production — must be suitable for public media distribution. Submissions will be accepted through Thursday, October 1, at 11:59 p.m. PST.

The applicant must be a U.S. citizen, the project's producer or director and have a minimum of three years professional producing and/or directing experience, or have a senior producer attached to the project. Additionally, the applicant must hold artistic, budgetary and editorial control, and must own the copyright of the proposed project.

Five projects will be selected for the opportunity to participate in PitchBLACK.

BPM will hold an informational webinar about its 2026 Open Call on Wednesday, September 9, at 6 p.m. ET. Attendees will receive guidance on how to apply and information on how acceptance decisions are made. Register for the free webinar at: <https://bit.ly/BPMOpenCallWebinar>.

Founded in 1979, BPM funds film and immersive stories, develops media makers and produces and distributes original content. Since launching PitchBLACK in 2015 to help bring high-quality, consequential stories to viewers, the Harlem-based national nonprofit has awarded more than \$2 million to film and immersive media projects. Films that have competed at PitchBLACK have gone on to premiere on PBS, WORLD, Create and PBS Digital. Program alumni have produced film, television and immersive projects for PBS, CNN, Showtime, Netflix, HBO, BET, NBC, The CW and more.

Last month, two former PitchBLACK winners became top jury prize winners at BlackStar Film Festival. [Zenón and the Rebel Boats](#) by Juan C. Dávila Santiago (Camila Rodriguez Estrada,

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producer) and [Finding Your Laughter](#) by Arlieta Hall (Brittany Alsot, producer) received BlackStar's Best Feature Documentary and Special Mention, respectively.

"As we prepare for our 10th PitchBLACK, we are looking for filmmakers with urgent, original stories that can deepen understanding of the Black experience and connect with audiences across the country," said Leslie Fields-Cruz, executive director of Black Public Media. "We're looking forward to identifying compelling projects, investing in the people behind them and helping prepare filmmakers to take their work to the next level."

BPM continues its work despite the loss of \$1.8 million from its budget following Congress' 2025 vote to rescind federal funding for public media. In response, BPM established the [Black Stories Production Fund](#) to help ensure that Black stories are never again subject to political whims.

To contribute to the fund, visit BPM's [donation page](#). Follow the organization at @blackpublicmedia on Instagram, Facebook and TikTok.

ABOUT BLACK PUBLIC MEDIA

Black Public Media supports the development of visionary content creators and distributes stories about the global Black experience to inspire a more equitable and inclusive future. For nearly 50 years, BPM has invested more than \$18 million in iconic documentaries and innovative immersive media projects. The organization helps independent makers — especially those whose work might otherwise be overlooked — bring their stories to life and reach audiences.

BPM-supported projects have earned numerous awards, including five Anthem Awards, five Emmys, 10 Peabodys, 14 Emmy nominations and an Academy Award nomination. In 2025, the rescission of federal support for public media created a significant gap in BPM's annual budget. In response, BPM is expanding its community of supporters through the [1.8 Million Donors campaign](#) and has launched the Black Stories Production Fund to ensure the continued production and distribution of these stories.

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