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New Jersey Web Festival Addresses Barriers-to-Entry For Creators In 2023

The Scholarship Program and Judging Sponsorship opens new doors and opportunities to creators worldwide.

NEW JERSEY - (November 17, 2022) - The New Jersey Web Festival (NJ WebFest) today announced two new programs to increase access for historically underrepresented creators as well as to create an even more fair and representative judging process. NJ WebFest feels strongly that festivals and awards programs should be both accessible to all creators and professionally managed/adjudicated to instill confidence that every submission, acceptance, nomination, and award winner is fairly considered.

The most pressing barrier-to-entry facing creators looking to submit to a festival is the cost of submission and/or attendance. The newly announced **Scholarship Program** helps to address this by partnering with companies to offer submission fee waivers to BIPOC, female-identifying, and/or LGBTQIA creators, as well as creators with disabilities. Creators will now be able to submit for a fee waiver, which will be offered out of a pot of money created by the sponsors of this program. In addition, each of our sponsors will have the opportunity to select projects for submission fee waiver(s), giving more opportunities for creators to receive fully covered submission to the 2023 NJ WebFest.

Creators who would like to apply for this program should visit the NJ WebFest website at <https://newjerseywebfest.com/sponsorship>.

Companies interested in sponsoring the Scholarship Program can learn more at <https://bit.ly/NJWFScholarshipSponsor>.

NJ WebFest is also committed to paying professionals to consider the projects submitted to the festival and act as judges for selection and awards nomination. The festival has created the **Judging Sponsorship** in order to pay more judges without raising submission fees. This sponsorship allows the festival to triple the number of judges considering each individual project that is submitted to the festival this year.

Companies interested in becoming a Judging Sponsor can learn more at <https://bit.ly/NJWFJudgeSponsorship>.

At launch, podcast host **Pinecast**, TTRPG digital tools platform **Demiplane**, and collaboration network **Polywork** have created the initial pool of money for the Scholarship Program. The festival will continue to add partners to this program to increase the available funds through the end of the submission process on **June 17, 2022**. In addition to sponsoring the Scholarship Program, podcast host Pinecast is the first judging sponsor for the 2023 New Jersey Web Festival.

“When we started Pinecast, we wanted to empower folks to tell their stories and share their ideas without having to be experts in the industry,” **said Pinecast founder Matt Basta.** “We’re excited to sponsor the New Jersey WebFest to help provide an opportunity for independent creators to have their passions recognized and held up on equal footing with the work of established professionals. It’s our hope that this inspires a new wave of podcasters, storytellers, and other artists to master their crafts and produce their best work.”

“The New Jersey WebFest is a festival for creators, by creators,” **said NJ WebFest founder and president Neem Basha.** “The alumni reviews on our FilmFreeway page illustrate just how much of a ‘creators’ festival’ we offer. So, as we head into our milestone fifth year, we wanted to offer more opportunities for talented creators around the globe to be part of what is known worldwide as the NJ WebFest Family. Our Scholarship Program helps us accomplish that goal, while our Judging Sponsorship ensures that those who do submit will get the most equitable shot at selection and award nomination. Pinecast, Demiplane, and Polywork all share the ethos of the New Jersey WebFest, and we are thrilled for them to be our first partners on these initiatives.”

Submissions for the 2023 Festival are now open. Deadlines are on January 12, 2023 (Earlybird), March 16, 2023 (Regular), and June 17, 2023 (Final). Additional information about deadlines, submission rules, regulations, and eligibility is available at <https://filmfreeway.com/NJWebFest>.

For more updates, follow [@NJWebFest](#) on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#), or visit <https://newjerseywebfest.com>.

Festival Information

Celebrating its 5th edition September 21-24, 2023, the New Jersey Web Festival is one of the top-rated film festivals in the world according to FilmFreeway.com. Dedicated to the empowerment and celebration of web-based content, in 2021 the festival became the world’s first film festival experience for Fiction Podcasts and Actual Play content. The 5th edition will be held in person in Montclair and Bloomfield, New Jersey, and will showcase the best in Web Series, Short Films, Pilots, Music Videos, Trailers, Fiction Podcasts, Actual Plays, Standalone Audio Fiction, and Scripts.

The festival offers creators workshops, panels, networking events, and professional development opportunities while also screening accepted projects to the weekend’s attendees. The festival is capped by its world-renowned Awards Gala featuring gourmet food, dessert, and live entertainment where all awards will be announced and presented. Projects from more than 25 countries have been programmed at the festival to date.