



**Strategic Plan
2018–2020**

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INTRODUCTION

As SFFILM evaluates its recent period of intense experimentation and growth, we face a remarkably different future than three years ago.

In 2015 the organization was just emerging from a turbulent time. Tragedy and turnover among chief executives and competing board visions had left the San Francisco Film Society, as it was known then, in a difficult place. The economy in the Bay Area was booming but the organization was not in a position to effectively leverage those resources. Staff was turning over quickly, with morale low and departments siloed.

The 2015–2017 strategic plan (summarized in Appendix 1) gave the organization a new Mission and a highly detailed approach to growth from a programming, fundraising, and operational perspective.

The financial picture improved through a combination of intense board recruitment and strong governance; effective corporate, foundation, and individual fundraising; timely program launches; and new marketing efforts. We were able to create capacity for special 60th anniversary efforts, involving high-impact film programming initiatives and a robust donor recruitment program. Major changes in staff composition and organizational structure operated in parallel, providing a solid structure for future growth in less public-facing areas of the organization. A rigorous overhaul of long-term programs also helped jettison underperforming screening series, while rationalizing other film screening initiatives to better adhere to the organization's new Mission.

The organization focused on four major efforts to move it back into the public eye:

1. A more streamlined and collaborative film festival, located in neighborhoods that made it easier to connect to the vibrant East and South Bay populations of the region.
2. A robust fall program of special presentations and small festivals explicitly designed to capitalize on the year-end awards dynamic.
3. A new brand, SFFILM (and a quartet of sub-brands—SFFILM Festival, SFFILM Presents, SFFILM Education, and SFFILM Makers) to move the organization into a more inclusive and confident future.
4. A full audit of Artist Development and Education activities, along with staffing and program shifts to create a new foundation for growth.

These changes were substantive and refocused the purpose and impact of the organization. The result has been an increasingly stable and confident SFFILM with opportunities for growth in multiple areas, as outlined in this document.

VISION, MISSION, VALUES

Our Vision and Mission statements remain unchanged from the 2015–2017 strategic plan:

VISION

We envision a world where film is an indispensable, relevant, and accessible art form.

MISSION

SFFILM champions the world’s finest films and filmmakers through programs anchored in and inspired by the spirit and values of the San Francisco Bay Area.

Our Values, however, have been updated. We felt it necessary to articulate more clearly what we meant by the reference to “Bay Area values” in our Mission statement. We also wanted to make sure that our Values truly functioned as intended: as guiding principles that apply across all of our activities, whether external-facing (like programming and partnerships) or internal-facing (like recruitment and operations). Everything we do, every decision we make, should be informed and guided by what really matters to us: our Values.

VALUES



The Art Form

We believe in the enduring power, beauty, and social impact of film and cherish it as an indispensable art form and an instrument of inquiry and education.



The Artists

We are committed to supporting the imagination, talent, and professional sustainability of filmmakers, with an eye to an ever-expanding community of voices from diverse backgrounds. The Bay Area is an increasingly important hub for independent filmmaking, and we celebrate the region’s growing role as a convening point for artists and funders alike.



Our Community

We are dedicated to delivering quality, enrichment, education, access, and enjoyment to everyone in our community—audiences, students, and members, as well as our partners, supporters, volunteers, and staff—and to meeting their demand for globally-oriented storytelling and thoughtful dialogue.



The San Francisco Bay Area

We are inspired by the place we live in and what it aspires to be: a center of curiosity, creativity, and conversation; a site for social action and political protest; a laboratory for innovation and inquiry; a gateway to global culture and diverse perspectives; and a harbor of equity and inclusion. Our work should champion and broadcast these values.

THE STORY IN NUMBERS

The financial summary below illustrates the organization's revenue and expenses during the most recent five-year time period and projects the three years covered by this strategic plan.

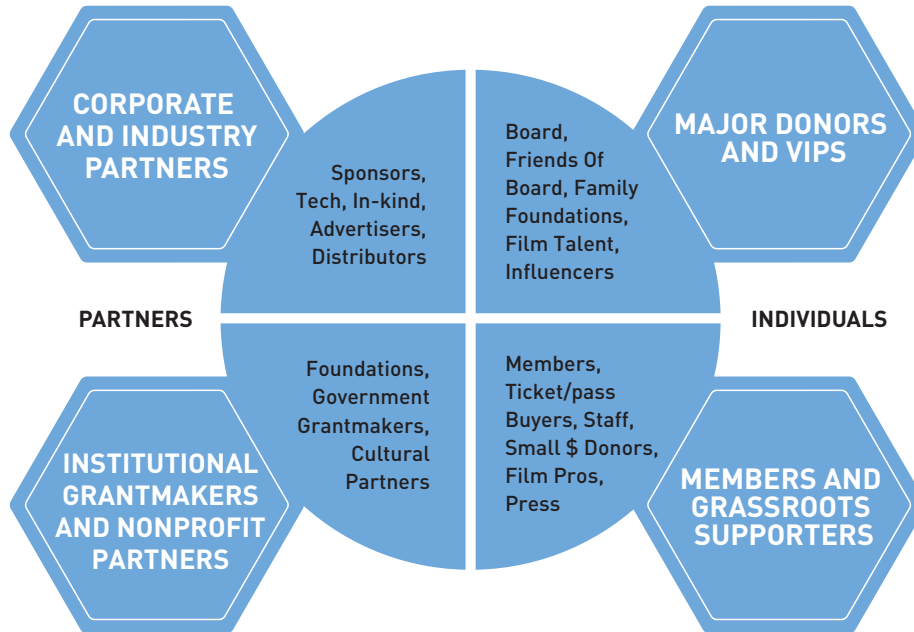
Please note:

- Contributed Revenue includes: individual donations (including Board), foundation grants, government grants, SFFILM Awards Night gala, and membership.
- Earned Revenue includes: ticket sales, entry fees, sponsorship, advertising, merchandise sales, fiscal sponsorship fees, tuition, and interest income.
- The figures exclude in-kind revenue and related expense.

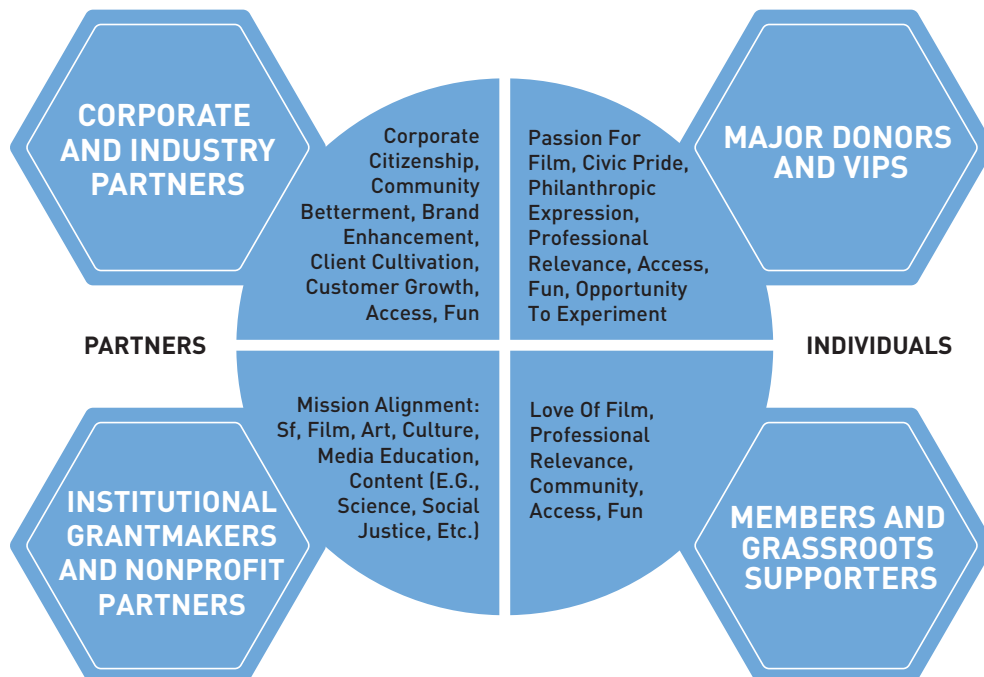
Excluding In-kind	2013 (audited)	2014 (audited)	2015 (audited)	2016 (unaudited)	2017 (estimated)	2018 (audited)	2019 (projected)	2020 (projected)
REVENUE								
Contributed Revenue	2,125,929	2,116,601	2,249,236	2,331,224	3,185,400	3,250,000	3,612,000	3,864,840
Earned Revenue	1,597,431	1,253,059	1,356,900	1,327,119	1,602,500	1,650,000	1,732,500	1,853,775
TRNA Released from Restriction	1,461,162	1,651,368	1,475,694	1,723,575	1,593,281	2,330,000	2,446,500	2,617,755
Total Revenue	5,184,522	5,021,028	5,081,830	5,381,918	6,381,181	7,230,000	7,791,000	8,336,370
Year-over-Year % (+/-)		-3.15%	1.21%	5.91%	18.57%	13.30%	7.76%	7.00%
EXPENSE								
Program Expense	3,731,814	3,841,195	3,729,870	4,046,899	5,048,222	5,830,000	6,221,000	6,656,470
General Management	807,715	543,681	682,153	652,890	675,719	700,000	835,000	893,450
Fundraising Expense	532,222	628,993	661,423	633,049	655,185	700,000	735,000	786,450
Total Expense	5,071,751	5,013,869	5,073,446	5,332,838	6,379,126	7,230,000	7,791,000	8,336,370
Year-over-Year % (+/-)		-1.14%	1.19%	5.11%	19.62%	13.34%	7.76%	7.00%
NET	112,771	7,159	8,384	49,080	2,055	0	0	0

WHO: OUR AUDIENCE

We segment SFFILM’s key constituents into four main groups:



We understand each segment’s motivations for engaging with SFFILM through qualitative research: surveys and one-on-one conversations. (Quantitative data about our audience can be found in Appendix 2.)



WHY: OUR GOALS

Before we lay out our strategic priorities for the 2018–2020 period, we want to describe the impacts and goals we are aiming to achieve.

1. **Artist and Art-Form Impact:** Through innovative partnering structures with individuals and foundations we will create new sources of support for filmmakers, ensuring their work is made, seen, and appreciated.
2. **Education:** Through national online programs we will contribute to a fact- and information-based society and provide more context for young people and education professionals to shape ideas about the world.
3. **Systems:** By investing in systems we provide the tools to empower staff to assume leadership in their individual roles and enable better and more data-driven decision-making.
4. **Partners and Venues:** Through partnerships with key cultural institutions in San Francisco, we will help drive continuous improvement in cultural best practices, elevate the role of film in the civic culture and create a stable venue configuration for the San Francisco International Film Festival.
5. **Tech / New Media:** By effectively engaging with the technology communities of the Bay Area, we provide a portal for other cultural organizations to find common cause with the leading changemakers on the planet.
6. **Audience / Community Impact:** Experimentation with audience development and growth, through new and refined programs for youth and adults, will inspire the formation of a more tightly-bound community of people interested in film.

HOW: OUR APPROACH

Our Values—articulated above—are a set of principles that guide our approach to our daily work.

With respect to our external-facing work:

- We approach everything we do with open-minded curiosity and embrace relevant change both in our medium and in the social context that surrounds it.
- We are an organization that interprets and champions global culture, with a focus on stories and artists who tell them. This helps our audiences and other members of our community better understand the world.
- We believe today's pressing social issues can be addressed by being given context in our work as film programmers, commissioners, and editors, and through our ability to convene meaningful conversations around film.
- We believe that diverse voices in art and society create new knowledge, new storytelling forms, and more thoughtful context for urgent discussion about who we are as a people.
- We seek to build ever-stronger communities around film and social dialogue in the Bay Area through programs for schools, youth and families, at the workplace, in theaters, and in programs designed for filmmakers of all levels.
- We believe that film is best presented as an interactive form, with discussion—live, published, and digital—as part of the alchemy of film as a medium.

As to our internal-facing work, here are some of the ways we will live our Values:

- We are committed to creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace.
- We seek to inspire and support an environment of open-mindedness and curiosity.
- We encourage the consideration of and participation in society-wide conversations larger than our immediate work.
- We seek to build new communities, through the medium of film, amongst ourselves and our personal connections.
- We are committed to excellence and high performance through ongoing improvement, preparedness for risk and change, a commitment to an improved data culture, and investment in the skill and expertise of our personnel.

WHAT: OUR STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

There was a remarkable consensus between board, management, and staff to utilize this moment to engage in a two-track program of consolidation and growth. The following five strategic initiatives on one hand provide innovative ideas on how to consolidate the success we have had with new programs and business opportunities; on the other hand we commit to substantive growth initiatives in the areas of Artist Development (SFFILM Makers) and Education (SFFILM Education), two areas which were not the focus of the 2015–2017 strategic plan.

Through this two-track plan we see opportunities to more firmly establish the Festival and year-round screening programs in the local and national conversation through considered growth opportunities, while forcefully articulating and executing high-impact visions that incubate the next generation of filmmakers and innovatively attract curious and informed film audiences into a new cultural community. Key to this approach will be ensuring that the work of harmonizing our various program and business areas continues, backed by a strongly articulated communications strategy for the organization as a whole and its core activities.

San Francisco lives at the heart of the technology revolution affecting every citizen on the planet. Our relationship to that sector is complicated. Our 2015–2017 Strategic Plan sought significant relationships with the technology sector of the Bay Area on a number of different levels and met some success connecting to this community as a funding source, as marketing partners, as a source for audiences, as distributors of films and programs, and as providers of digital tools for our filmmakers. In addition we have relied on this sector to grow our interest in “new media” offerings that feel connected to the history and culture of cinema. So while we do not commit to a specific, standalone initiative below, we have elected to instead integrate relationships with the technology and “new media” communities into each of the initiatives below.

#1 LAUNCH MAJOR NEW ARTIST DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

The 2015–2017 Strategic Plan focused on building and piloting new efforts around the annual Festival and year-round programming. 2018–2020 will focus on aggressively building and piloting new initiatives in the Artist Development area now known as SFFILM Makers (formerly Filmmaker360). Success in this area should build the national and international profile of the organization with high alignment to our mission, as well as deepen our commitment and relevance to the Bay Area creative community. Initiatives will include:

- Building a new “investor pool” program that convenes, educates, and strengthens the Bay Area film investor community and connects them with a better-informed SFFILM Makers network of artists and projects.
- Growing the Artist Development program to ensure its long-term sustainability by expanding, harmonizing, and diversifying funder partnerships, including artisanally designed film funds and residencies created in collaboration with funding partners.
- Creating significant national partnerships with like-minded institutions to experiment with riskier programs and ensure that innovation in the field continues.
- Building the reputation and visibility of the SFFILM Makers program through new marketing efforts in order to increase the quantity, quality, and diversity of the program’s applicants.
- Transforming FilmHouse into an inclusive, accessible, vibrant hub for the Bay Area filmmaking community through a new commitment to event programming and a robust mentorship system.
- Developing meaningful and relevant virtual reality and new media programming.
- Tech: Making a strong pitch to technology companies entering the media space to work with us as a funding source and as a partner to aid filmmakers in projects, as well as business and technical assistance. We will also contemplate the implications of FilmHouse as a possible “future of film” hub of interest to future technologists.
- New Media: Launching a new media commissioning program, unique to the nonprofit space.

Revenue and Expense Management Implications:

- New revenue opportunities and challenges related to “investor pool,” new funds and new residencies.
- National marketing and communications efforts for SFFILM Makers will be a new material expense.
- New funders for our investor pool, new funds, and new residencies will require the active deployment of Board volunteers to secure the partners and accompanying revenue.
- New government support programs related to production opportunities in San Francisco.

#2 NEW EDUCATION EFFORTS

SFFILM views programs for youth as essential to its Mission. Film has several advantages as a tool for youth education. On the narrative/fiction side, film provides collectively understood inspirational lessons that can focus young people on their own possibilities in life and enhance their empathy with others. On the documentary side, fact-based media explorations can cut through the clutter of contemporary digital life and provide tools to shape opinions about issues facing us as a society. The core of our work involves enhanced screenings, featuring special guest speakers and lesson plans that continue the learning experience back in the classroom or at home. We intend to grow in both of these areas with two parallel expansions:

Year-Round Family Program

We currently have many offerings for families—distinct from our nationally-recognized schools program—that occur only during the Festival and involve both enhanced screenings and workshops. We intend to expand these offerings year-round and cultivate new family audiences and parent volunteers through these programs.

Lesson Plan Web Portal

Currently, SFFILM Education creates 12–15 lesson plans around individual films each year that are used in-class by visiting school groups, K–12. These plans are widely admired by school administrators, teachers, parents, kids themselves—and the filmmakers whose work is championed. We intend to refurbish a pre-existing web portal (FilmEd) to distribute an increased number of plans nationally to serve key education audiences on a national level.

Revenue and Expense Management Implications:

- Systems rebuild and ongoing maintenance is a material expense.
- Distribution companies will be a target for supporting revenue for the portal.
- Expansion of year-round family programming will require appropriately scaled expense budgeting

#3 INVEST IN NEW AND FORTIFIED SYSTEMS

The 2015–2017 Strategic Plan committed SFFILM to harmonization across our programmatic and business areas. The efforts to address this harmonization initiated a productive period of audit and analysis of the way our systems and workflows buttressed or weakened interdepartmental communication and the execution of cross-departmental goals.

In the 2018–2020 Strategic Plan, the strategic initiatives preceding this one depend greatly on a commitment to ongoing system consolidation and growth. But just as our values put artists, audiences, and communities at the forefront, SFFILM’s systems investments will focus on addressing needs of our staff and constituents.

Investment will be focused on:

- Formalization of a cross-departmental team dedicated to systems and technology planning, including prioritization, budgeting, and training.
- Leveraging consultant expertise and growing internal staff competency to execute data-driven analysis of the success of the strategic initiatives. This will include planning for appropriate data collection to assess the communities we are targeting with the consolidation of our Festival hub as well as the audience we intend to develop through bold experimentation.

Revenue and Expense Management Implications:

- Consultant on key SFFILM customer engagement and data management systems will be a material expense.
- Updating and training on relevant data systems will be a material expense, as well as necessary augmentation of staff capacity and measuring tools referenced in our audience development initiative.
- Improved user experiences should be visible in earned revenue.
- Other pilot programs may create material expense.

#4 CONSOLIDATE FESTIVAL/YEAR-ROUND PROGRAMMING HUB

The move downtown for the SFFILM Festival's 60th anniversary was seen as an unqualified success. Reimagining tactical rental relationships in the neighborhood as year-round progressive cultural partnerships, along with new opportunities at other strategic locations, will be among our most important priorities. Special attention will be required to address the careful balance of brand promotion within these partnership structures. We seek within this initiative:

- Prioritization of year-round relationships with Yerba Buena Center for the Arts and SFMOMA, founded on shared creative interests and values. Special attention will be paid to growth-oriented marketing and business partnership efforts that benefit both organizations alongside already recognized programming affinities.
- The addition of new venues in the downtown / SOMA area to consolidate this programming hub.
- A continued presence in the Mission neighborhood involving creative partnership opportunities with cinema organizations there.
- An opportunity to add new vibrant East Bay partners, especially in Oakland.
- A field scan of organizations in the region to better track opportunities for further cooperation, as well as organizations that provide competition to our work.
- The creation of a roadmap to consider new exhibition, office, and artist residency builds so the organization can take advantage of unforeseen opportunities as they arise.
- Tech: Ongoing engagement with the technology business sector that includes workplace screenings in San Francisco headquarters of key companies, as well as embedded program collaborations within our partner institutions.
- New Media: Continuing virtual reality and related media showcases at the Festival and at other strategic times throughout the year in partnership with these or other venues.

Revenue and Expense Implications:

- Significant commitment to joint programming ventures and the joint outfitting of YBCA's primary theater for top-quality cinema presentations.
- Fulfilling commitment to SFMOMA partnership.
- Revenue and expense implications related to additional venues TBD.

#5 BOLDLY EXPERIMENT WITH NEW AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

For most of its history, the financial model for SFFILM's public-facing programs has been based on earned revenue assumptions, i.e., ticket sales correlated strongly to expense outlays. Pressures from online entertainment, demographic shifts in the region, and general changes in cultural consumption patterns mean that ticket revenue feels less relevant to our current environment; and the rise of strategic philanthropy makes it less important to our bottom line.

For the last three years SFFILM has had spare capacity at the Festival, year-round events and at Education screenings. Can we utilize these available seats to drive new audiences to film in new ways? The flip side to bringing in new audiences is the need for a diligent strategy to retain and engage them—as members, perhaps, or something different, like social media or community ambassadors.

We need to find the city's movie lovers and prospective movie lovers, make sure we are speaking to (nearly) all of them and relentlessly determine what they need to stay engaged with us. Some starting ideas include:

- A national field landscape study of successful unorthodox audience growth mechanisms for film and other cultural organizations, utilizing foundation resources and volunteer tools.
- Broader and bolder use of community engagement strategies, especially targeted programming and an investigation of communities not participating in our current programs. We will also better understand how strategic philanthropy and enlightened corporate support can fill the revenue gap around these strategies, in line with current Google support of our Education screenings.
- Create new programs and reframe existing work to prompt deeper relationships with social issue-oriented organizations and communities. Create deliberate audience-building structures around these partnerships.
- Make our audience initiatives drive a more data-focused organization, with an emphasis on structural investment and partnerships.
- Join field leaders in tracking, understanding, and leveraging audience metrics, using best and innovative practices.
- Trade access for data wherever possible.

- Build more deliberate measuring tools and goals—as well as staff capacity—for audience acquisition, retention, and growth.
- Create a sophisticated formal influencer strategy, adapting current social media influencer models to our specific needs.
- Reshape our press corps and media relations strategy so it responds more rapidly to web-based journalists working outside of traditional film criticism.
- Tech: Utilize the wisdom and hands-on assistance of local companies and volunteers from the sector to collaborate on this initiative; expand engagement with tech sector workers as part of our audience growth strategy.
- New Media: SFFILM has learned that VR, AR, and other new media offerings attract a younger and more diverse audience seeking both consumer and professional engagement. Utilize this knowledge to grow offerings accordingly.

Revenue and Expense Management Implications:

- Field landscape study and consultant will be a material expense: approximately \$35,000
- Updating and training on relevant data systems will be a material expense.
- Earned revenue relating to ticket sales will be sacrificed for pilot projects in select instances, with counterbalancing strategic philanthropy required.
- Other pilot programs may create material expenses.

APPENDIX 1: 2015-2017 STRATEGIC PLAN RECAP

For ease of reference, below we recap the Vision, Mission, Values, and program goals articulated in the 2015–2017 Strategic Plan. For the new Strategic Plan, covering the years 2018–2020, we have retained the Vision and Mission statements from the prior plan, but update the Values statement and identify a new set of goals and strategic initiatives.

VISION

We envision a world where film is an indispensable, relevant, and accessible art form.

MISSION

SFFILM champions the world’s finest films and filmmakers through programs anchored in and inspired by the spirit and values of the San Francisco Bay Area.

VALUES



Film

We believe in the enduring power and beauty of film and cherish it as an indispensable art form.



Filmmakers

We are committed to supporting the imagination, talent, and professional sustainability of filmmakers, especially those working in the Bay Area.



Audience

A robust film culture depends on engaged, curious, and diverse audiences. Our programs are dedicated to delivering quality, enrichment, education, and enjoyment to our community.



San Francisco Bay Area

San Francisco is a city of global interest, the Bay Area a gateway to the future. We are inspired by where we live and are proud to welcome the best film artists in the world to share in its innovation and creativity.

PROGRAM GOALS

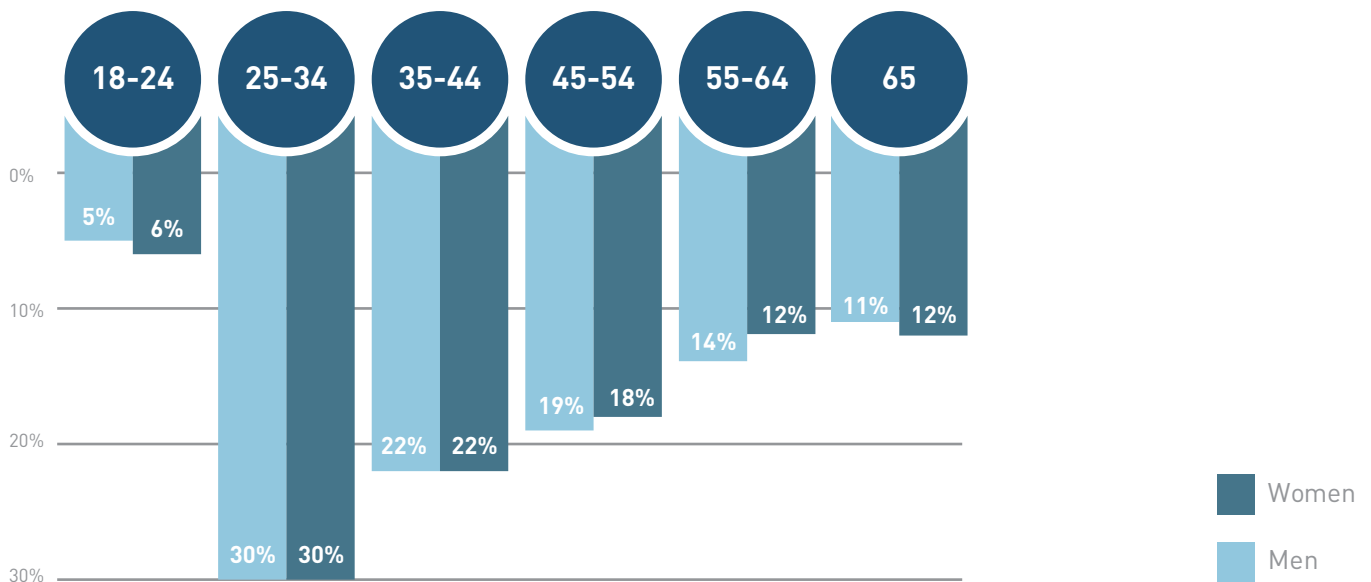
1. Embed Bay Area thought leadership in our programming.
2. Encourage meaningful dialogue between the film and tech sectors.
3. Engage film-related media.
4. Harmonize our programs.
5. Develop program streams to reach new audiences and locations.

APPENDIX 2: AUDIENCE DATA

From the 2017 SFFILM Festival, we have the following quantitative data regarding SFFILM Members and Festival ticket buyers:

AGE + GENDER

Self-reported information from people in their Facebook profiles. Information only available for people aged 18 and older.



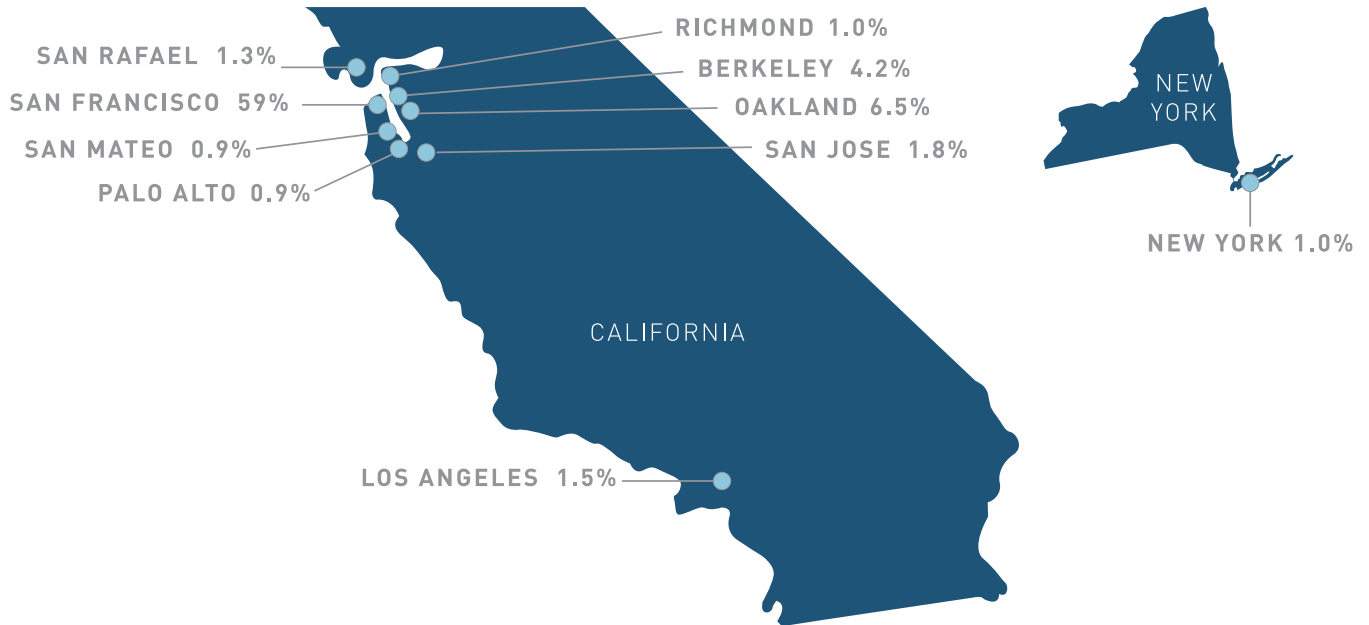
GENDER

(FACEBOOK INSIGHTS)



LOCATION - TOP CITIES

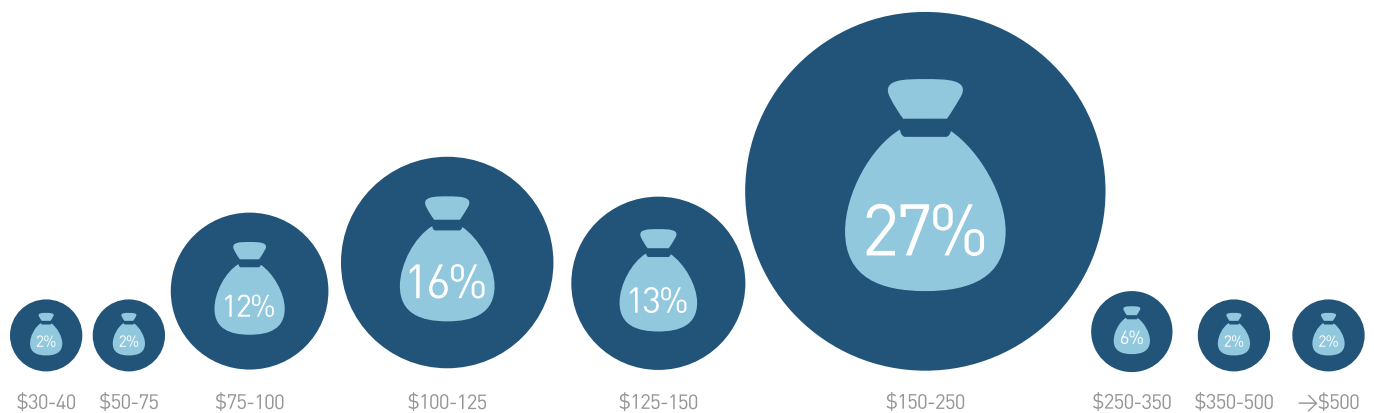
(GOOGLE ANALYTICS)



HOUSEHOLD INCOME

(FACEBOOK INSIGHTS)

In thousands of US dollars



PROFESSIONS: TOP 5 JOB TITLES

Likely industries where people work based on self-reported data on Facebook.



MANAGEMENT



ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT,
SPORTS, AND MEDIA



ADMINISTRATIVE
SERVICES



EDUCATION
AND LIBRARIES



SALES

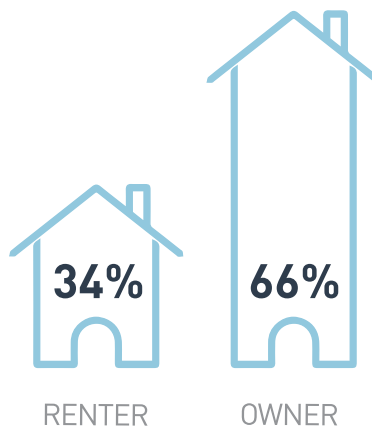
HOUSEHOLD SIZE

Number of adults and children who live in a single US home, based on survey responses, purchase activity, and publicly available data.

SOURCE: ACXIOM



HOME OWNERSHIP





Strategic Plan 2018–2020

DATE: DECEMBER 20, 2017