



March 1, 2024

Mayor David Holt and City Council
c/o Mr. Craig Freeman, City Manager
200 N. Walker Ave.
Oklahoma City, OK 73102

RE: Semi-Annual FY 204 Oklahoma City Film & Creative Industries Report

Dear Mayor Holt and City Council Staff:

It is my pleasure to submit the attached semi-annual report describing the Oklahoma City Film & Creative Industries Office's (FCIO) efforts during the first half of Fiscal Year 24.

The benchmarks established in my August 25, 2023 annual report for Year 2 are as follows:

- Develop Strategic Plan for long-term funding of the FCIO and its programs/services.
- In collaboration with other official state and city film office leadership and key stakeholders, develop a unified 2024 legislative agenda in support of growth and jobs creation for the film and television production industry in Oklahoma. Devise a strategy for garnering wide industry support and education at the Oklahoma State Capitol.
- In collaboration with the Oklahoma Film & Music Office (OFMO), the Tulsa Film, Music, Arts & Culture Office (Tulsa FMAC), and the Cherokee Film Commission (CFC), continue efforts toward the creation of a standardized and comprehensive statewide workforce development and certification initiative. The new entity will serve as the hub into which currently existing programs offered around the state by vocation and technical schools, two-year and four-year university programs, and union locals can feed.
- Create one or more programs to support local productions with anticipated local expenditures below the \$500,000 threshold to qualify for the Oklahoma City Film Incentive Program. One idea under consideration is an Oklahoma City Film/TV investors circle to include a group of high-net-worth individuals with an interest in supporting our industry and local talent. Another idea is a grant program. Ideally, these programs would be funded and managed separately, but work collaboratively with FCIO.
- Explore the possibility of creating an annual workforce training scholarship fund to help defray course costs for individuals from underserved communities.
- Conduct external marketing to support Oklahoma City as a film/creative industries hub and expand internal community partnership/industry engagement.
- Support incoming film projects and local film development efforts to support engagement/project development goals.
- Continued presence at local and regional film gatherings and showcases.

All activities are detailed in subsequent pages of this report. I have separated this report into two sections. These sections include progress to date for the benchmarks described above, and important metrics depicting the Office's achievements for the July 1 through December 31 timeframe.

Outcomes include other work in the community including:

- Collecting and reporting Oklahoma City Film's economic impact data
- Moderating and sitting on panels
- Serving on industry workforce development boards
- Collaborating with local companies and non-profits on strategic planning
- Making presentations on the film industry and its economic impact to civic groups
- Cultivating new industry relationships and leads
- Providing letters of support for all productions wishing to film in Oklahoma City

During the first half of Fiscal Year 24, activities have included the following:

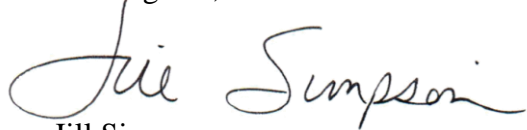
- FCIO co-hosted an Oklahoma Film sales suite at American Film Market (AFM) at Le Meridien Delfina Hotel in Santa Monica, CA from October 31 through November 4. The Oklahoma suite was a partnership endeavor for all four Oklahoma film offices. AFM, a weeklong market and conference, is attended by 7,000+ executives from around the world and from across all sectors of the film industry each year.
- FCIO participated in planning, coordination, and co-hosting of "Sunsets + Silver Screens," an Oklahoma Film reception that was attended by over 150 studio executives and producers, at The Aster LA in Hollywood on November 2, 2023.
- FCIO took lead role in planning, coordinating, and co-hosting a small VIP recruitment event for the Oklahoma delegation attending "Sunsets + Silver Screens" and key invited studio executives from NBCUniversal, Paramount, and Amazon Studios.
- FCIO marketed to the industry via its own full-page 4-color ad in a special Oklahoma section of the venerable entertainment publication, Daily Variety's October 31 edition. Issues were available to all subscribers and displayed in all public spaces during the entire run of American Film Market.
- I worked with the Oklahoma City Economic Development Trust, the City of Oklahoma City, and the Greater OKC Chamber to conditionally prequalify a new rebate application under the code name Project Silence. The small feature film with a budget of roughly \$800,000 was initially planned for filming in Tulsa but relocated to Oklahoma City in late 2023. It was prequalified by the Trust on February 13 and the Oklahoma City City Council on March 5. This marks our fourth project to be qualified for the Oklahoma City Film Incentive Program since it began in early 2023.
- I worked with another rebate applicant in late 2023 for a project code named Project High Plains. The \$5 million character-driven feature film which is set on the high plains of South Dakota, is now planning to begin filming in April 2024. I will present the application to the Trust on March

26 and City Council and April 9. If approved, it will mark the fifth project prequalified for the Oklahoma City rebate program.

- Film legislative meetings occurred throughout the first half of FY24. In December, the FCIO and the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber facilitated a meeting between the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, OFMO, the Tulsa Regional Chamber, and Tulsa FMAC to discuss ideas for the agenda and ways to meet individual and shared goals. Conversations resumed in early January and continued throughout the month leading up to the start of legislative session. All groups agreed on support for an increase in the annual cap for the Filmed in Oklahoma Act of 2021. The state currently caps the program at \$30M per year but is quickly depleted by more requests than the state can accommodate rendering us unable to sustain a 12-month calendar year of work for our local crew and companies. In early February, Representatives Echols and Fetgatter introduced HB 3964. If passed, it will establish a new program to support episodic and live-audience series content.
- Continued sales and recruitment efforts on both the national and local level.

Thank you for your ongoing support for the Oklahoma City Film & Creative Industries Office and the important work we are doing to grow the local industry.

Best regards,



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OKLAHOMA CITY FILM & CREATIVE INDUSTRIES OFFICE (FCIO)

YEAR: 2 / SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT: July 1, 2023 – January 31, 2024

Part 1: Goals/Outcomes

EXPECTATION 1: Explore Options for long-term funding.

GOAL	OUTCOME
Develop Strategic Plan for long-term funding of the FCIO and its programs and services.	<p><i>Discussions in Progress:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ongoing internal discussions to identify possible sources/entities that could provide support for OKCFCIO beyond the conclusion of the initial three-year contract period ending June 30, 2025. As a part of these conversations, we are revisiting the original planned scope of the office's work and considering a strategy for future years that could include expanding its scope and services.</i> <i>As a part of this work, I am conducting research on other city/regional offices that have included music components to find out which aspects they support, and how they are staffed and funded. All this information will be provided to the City of Oklahoma City when completed.</i>

EXPECTATION 2: Collaborate on 2024 Oklahoma Film Legislative Agenda.

GOAL	OUTCOME
In collaboration with other official state and city film office leadership and key stakeholders, develop a unified 2024 legislative agenda in support of growth and jobs creation for the film and television production industry in Oklahoma. Devise a strategy for garnering wide industry support and education at the Oklahoma State Capitol.	<p><i>Discussions in Progress:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Film legislative discussions with Jeff Seymour, Cynthia Reid, Mark Vanlandingham, and Derek Sparks of the Greater OKC Chamber began in July and continued through the end of 2023. In December, OKC Film and the Greater OKC Chamber organized and facilitated a virtual meeting with The Oklahoma Department of Commerce, OFMO, the Tulsa Regional Chamber, and Tulsa FMAC to work towards consensus on an agenda.</i> <i>I created a short-list of considerations that will be important for Oklahoma City.</i> <i>In early 2024 and with the addition of Mike Jackson as the Greater OKC Chamber's Senior VP of Governmental Affairs, we actively strategized about film legislation and engaged bill authors as well as the other three film offices.</i> <i>As of early March, Representatives Echols and Fetgatter's HB 3964 has passed the House but was stripped of funding. It has now been heard in the Senate where it is awaiting a committee assignment. If passed, funding will likely occur during budget negotiations at the end of legislative session. The bill establishes a new incentive program to support episodic and live-audience series content.</i>

EXPECTATION 3: Collaborate on creation of standardized statewide workforce training program.

GOAL	OUTCOME
<p>In collaboration with the Oklahoma Film & Music Office, the Tulsa Film, Music, Arts & Culture Office, and the Cherokee Film Commission, continue efforts toward the creation of a standardized and comprehensive statewide workforce development and certification initiative. The new entity will serve as the hub into which currently existing programs offered around the state by vocation and technical schools, two-year and four-year university programs, and union locals can feed.</p>	<p><i>In Progress:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Incremental work continues on this front. I continue to serve on the Advisory Board of the Film Education Institute of Oklahoma (FEIO), a non-profit offering set crew training to both Oklahoma City Public School student, at area Metro Technology Centers, and at OCCC. FEIO needs increased funding to support expanded training. The board is currently recruiting new members and a new executive director with experience in fundraising and grant-writing to assist with this goal. The Board is exploring ways for FEIO to be nimbler in the face of limited state rebate funding.</i> <i>Oklahoma film industry workforce development continues to be the most challenging nut to crack. There are numerous universities, colleges, tech campuses, non-profits, and for-profit companies in the state with a personal stake in developing film workforce development programs. Additionally, the State of Oklahoma and the Cherokee Film Commission are each working on their own plans. Efforts to unify the group have so far been challenging in netting meaningful progress.</i> <i>Met with the Cherokee Nation team and Creative Talent South, the company they have hired to devise their workforce plan. I was one of several individuals, including the Lt. Governor, invited to meet with them to hear their plan and share our ideas and what we see as our critical needs.</i> <i>Met with Shane Phillips of Work Ready Oklahoma to hear about the training he is offering and how it is intersecting with the film industry and explore opportunities for collaboration.</i> <i>In January, I participated in a meeting at ODOC with all other stakeholders from the other state film offices, Career Tech campuses, and non-profits to participate in a workforce training summit at the Oklahoma Department of Commerce to revisit the topic of creating a statewide training and certification program.</i> <i>Met with Chad Burris, a native Oklahoman now living in New Mexico. In 2023, he was named Executive Director of the New Mexico Media Academy, the state's new film workforce development program. I worked closely with Chad a decade ago when he was producing films in Oklahoma, and I was the state film commissioner. My plan is to keep the avenues of communication open between us to hear about his work and discuss best practices with him as we develop our program here in the state.</i>

EXPECTATION 4: Create program(s) to support local productions with budgets below \$500,000.

GOAL	OUTCOME
Create one or more programs to support local productions with anticipated local expenditures below the \$500,000 threshold to qualify for the Oklahoma City Film Incentive Program. One idea under consideration is an Oklahoma City Film/TV investors circle to include a group of high-net-worth individuals with an interest in supporting our industry and local talent. Another idea is a grant program. Ideally, these programs would be funded and managed separately, but work collaboratively with FCIO.	<p><i>Discussion in Progress:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I have had discussions with various community and industry business leaders who think this could be a viable plan. More work will need to be done to assess the feasibility and develop a plan. This type of program would, ideally, be managed separately from FCIO.</i> <i>In the meantime, I continue to meet with and mentor filmmakers and local production companies doing projects below the \$500K minimum threshold. One idea under consideration is for FCIO to host a story pitch training session taught by industry experts. This could be followed by an actual “speed dating” type pitch session with an industry panel as part of our 2024 DeadCenter Film Festival sponsorship. It would provide a valuable sales training tool for those starting out in the industry.</i> <i>Beginning in the spring, FCIO will launch local industry mixers at regular intervals as a means of bringing crew, support services, and production company representatives together to meet, network, and receive industry updates. The mixers will take place at moving locations to showcase our facilities. The primary goal is to encourage collaboration and cross-pollination on projects, particularly on the smaller ones for which resources are limited.</i>

EXPECTATION 5: Explore the possibility of creating an annual workforce training scholarship fund.

GOAL	OUTCOME
Explore the possibility of creating an annual workforce training scholarship fund to help defray course costs for individuals from underserved communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>This will be addressed once more progress can be achieved on the workforce development front described in Expectation 3.</i>

EXPECTATION 6: Conduct External Marketing to support Oklahoma City as an industry hub.

GOAL	OUTCOME
<p>Conduct external marketing to support Oklahoma City as a film/creative industries hub and expand internal community partnership/industry engagement.</p>	<p><i>In Progress:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Creation and placement of a full-page, four-color ad highlighting Oklahoma City, our production facilities, and cash rebate, and featured prominently in a section spotlighting Oklahoma in <u>Daily Variety</u>, the industry's most respected trade paper. The issue was distributed widely to both regular subscribers and to the 7,000 industry members attending American Film Market in Santa Monica.</i> • <i>Creation and distribution of 60-page four-color pocket size Oklahoma City Look Book. The marketing tool includes information on locations and facilities as well as interesting facts about our city. The book also includes details about both FCIO and our cash rebate program.</i> • <i>In partnership with OFMO, TFMAC, and the CFC, FCIO hosted a sales and marketing suite at American Film Market where registrants could come by to hear all about filming in Oklahoma and the various quadrants of the state and the incentives we offer. We each distributed look books for our areas.</i> • <i>The four film offices hosted a highly successful industry reception, "Sunsets + Silver Screens," on November 2 at The Aster Los Angeles. Over 150 studio executives and producers attended from major studios such as NBCUniversal, Paramount, Warner Bros, Disney, Sony, Netflix, and Amazon. We provided each guest with a goodie bag of curated branded items from each of our jurisdictions. We also distributed our Look Books.</i> • <i>Directly following the reception, the four film offices partnered in hosting a small VIP dinner for studio executives from NBCUniversal, Paramount, and Amazon along with representatives from the Greater OKC Chamber, the Tulsa Chamber, and Cherokee Nation to discuss bringing more business to Oklahoma.</i> • <i>Met with Sony Pictures Sr. VP of Film Finance, Fran Lucci, to walk her through the new OKC film incentive and the assets we have to offer in the city.</i> • <i>Met with Ryan Paine of Roadside Attractions about his slate of projects and to discuss Oklahoma City incentives, facilities, and incentives.</i> • <i>Met with local filmmaker Courtney Childress to discuss networking opportunities within the OKC industry and to hear her ideas of ways to support local storytellers.</i> • <i>Multiple meetings with Jon Vogel, principal of Apex Post, a new Dolby Certified mixing studio situated at Filmmakers Ranch (formerly named Green Pastures).</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Met with Alexander Mickelthwate and Brent Hart of the Oklahoma City Philharmonic to discuss ways to collaborate and the possibility of increasing film scoring activities in Oklahoma City.</i> • <i>Met with Rachel Cannon to discuss Project Dirt Road and plans for PSM.</i> • <i>Participated in a lunch meeting and tour of the Ambassador Hotel with GM, Jason Clark, and Marketing and Events Director, Julianna Lehman</i> • <i>Participated in a tour of the Sheraton Downtown with Sales Manager, Dee Dee DeVore.</i> • <i>Participated in a tour of the Hampton Inn & Suites Bricktown with GM, Michael Ramirez.</i> • <i>Met with Renee McKenney, the President of Visit Tulsa, about ways our two film offices can collaborate.</i> • <i>Visited Vahid Farzaneh and Kelley Gann of Freestyle Media to tour their new downtown space and talk about industry growth, the possibility of a film investors' fund, and a fall industry mixer.</i>
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EXPECTATION 7: Support incoming film projects and local film development efforts.

GOAL	OUTCOME
Support incoming film projects and local film development efforts to support engagement/project development goals.	<p><i>In Progress:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Once the Screen Actors Guild strike ended in early November, NBCUniversal immediately began ramping up activities to come back to Oklahoma to finish filming Project Dirt Road. The crew began trickling back the week of November 6. Filming took place in December, wrapping just before Christmas.</i> • <i>Participated in a comprehensive VIP set visit at Prairie Surf Studios that included City of Oklahoma City officials, NBCUniversal executives and government relations personnel, and state lawmakers.</i> • <i>In partnership with OFMO and Tulsa FMAC, co-hosted a dinner for NBCUniversal Government Affairs executive, Michael Jean, who was in Oklahoma City to participate in and facilitate the VIP set visit.</i> • <i>Continuing to lend support to the producers of both Project Urban and Project Dino as questions arise about the rebate program requirements and general logistics.</i> • <i>Worked with the producers of our fourth rebate film, Project Silence. The \$800K film shot in and around Oklahoma City in late January. FCIO provided locations and logistical support for the film that relocated from Tulsa to Oklahoma City to utilize our rebate program.</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Currently working with producers of what could be our fifth rebate film, Project High Plains. Set in South Dakota, the \$5 million feature film project is targeted for an April shoot. FCIO so far has provided support with locations, hotels, crew base and the details of the rebate program. I will present this application to the OKCEDT on March 26 and City Council on April 9.</i> • <i>In recent months, I have spoken to at least a half dozen productions interested in filming in Oklahoma City. The budgets range from \$500K to \$10 million. We have been scouting locations and taking fresh photographs for the database for these projects.</i> • <i>Prequalified rebate project, Project Dino, had to push their production start date to April 2024 in the wake of last year's Writers Guild and Actors Guild strikes.</i> • <i>I am in frequent meetings with a variety of local production companies, studios, and filmmakers to lend my office's support to their projects.</i>
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EXPECTATION 8: Continued presence at local and regional film gatherings and showcases.

GOAL	OUTCOME
Continued presence at local and regional film gatherings and showcases.	<p><i>In Progress:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Met with the production team, cast and crew of the TV series, "Fairwood," filming at Green Pastures. Toured sets and new facilities being constructed at Green Pastures.</i> • <i>Toured Fordson Hotel with deadCenter Film Festival Executive Director, Cacky Poarch, to consider it as a hub for the 2024 festival.</i> • <i>Moderated a panel at Yale Theatre after the screening of OKC filmmakers Ty McMahon' and Brandon Kobs' documentary short, "Toy Cart." The film chronicles the work of Oklahoma Children's Hospital volunteers and their newly designed toy cart that incorporates the artwork of local muralist, Denise Duong.</i> • <i>Participated in an informal Women in Film networking gathering at Boiling Point Media for women from all over the state who are working in the film industry.</i> • <i>Visited the set of the Clara Luper documentary filming at Prairie Surf Creative to meet with local crew and documentary subjects from the community.</i> • <i>Visited with the executive and media teams of Public Strategies to hear more about their plans for a new LED volume production studio in downtown OKC.</i> • <i>Spoke at the Oklahoma City Hotel General Managers' Meeting at the Omni to talk about the economic impact of the</i>

	<p><i>film industry and how they can connect with productions coming in.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>In October, I was a presenter at the quarterly meeting of the Public Strategies team of roughly seventy-five people. It provided a wonderful opportunity to share information with them about the mission of FCIO and our incentive program. Public Strategies is preparing to launch a virtual production studio and training facility in downtown Oklahoma City in early 2024. I helped promote the endeavor at American Film Market.</i> • <i>Attended Oklahoma premiere and reception for “Killers of the Flower Moon” in Tulsa. Networked with other film commissions, film crew, and industry members.</i> • <i>Attended a luncheon for all four Oklahoma film commissions and staff in December to celebrate our strong collaboration and a successful year for each of our offices.</i>
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Part 2: Important Metrics

Important FY24 Metrics

	July 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023
Rebate Projects in production	4
Active Project Development	7
Letters of Support Issued for OKC Filming/Permits	35
FCIO Rebate Applications Received	6
FCIO Rebate Applications Pre-Qualified	4
New Recruitment Contacts	117
Local Stakeholder Outreach	401
Site Visits	15
Trade Shows/Call Trips	2
Festival Sponsorship	0
Press/Media – Ads, Articles, and Interviews	22
Events Hosted/Sponsored	6

OKC FILM REBATE PROGRAM PREQUALIFICATION LOG - As of 3.8.24

PROJECT CODE NAME	PREQUAL DATE	FILMING DATES	QUAL OKC SPEND	%	REBATE AMOUNT	PROJTD TOTAL IMPACT	OKCEDT APPROVAL	CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL	PROGRAM BALANCE
2023									
Project Dirt Road	1/3/23	5/8/23 –	42,600,000	5%	1,000,000	258,001,894	6/20/23	7/5/23	2,000,000
Project Urban	2/10/23	6/5/23 – 6/30/23	518,625	5%	25,931	1,223,589	6/20/23	7/5/23	1,974,069
Project Dino	7/01/23	4/24? -	675,055	5%	33,753	1,549,884	8/29/23	9/12/23	1,940,316
2024									
Project Silence	1/5/24	1/24/24 – 2/16/24	522,584	5%	26,129	1,499,039	1/30/24	2/13/24	1,914,187
Project High Plains	11/20/23	4/22/24 – TBD	4,733,748	5%	236,867	10,839,121	3/26/24 (SCHEDULED)	4/9/24 (SCHEDULED)	1,677,320
TOTALS			49,050,012		1,322,680	273,113,527			1,677,320

NOTE: Per project cap of \$1M
Program cap of \$3M