

VANCOUVER ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL SOCIETY

29th Annual Vancouver Asian Film Festival: Call for Entries

November 6–16, 2025



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Submission Guidelines

About the Festival

VAFF is the longest running pan-Asian diaspora film festival in Canada, founded in 1995, debuting in September 1997. Since then, tens of thousands of film lovers have experienced a diverse selection of Asian, North American, and International films, in English and other languages.

Vancouver Asian Film Festival (VAFF) is dedicated to promoting and celebrating the diversity and depth of Asian culture and identity in film and media, to help North American Asian actors and filmmakers more authentically and more powerfully define and express themselves on screen.

Through its annual film festival and many other programs and events hosted in Vancouver, Canada, VAFF's mission is to be the go-to forum for the public and the film industry to engage in and elevate Asian representation in film and media. VAFF envisions a world where North American Asian actors and filmmakers have the resources and opportunities to shape mainstream culture in a powerful and positive way.

VAFF plans to continue with the hybrid model for our festival, featuring on-site live screenings and presentations in Vancouver for five days as well as an online festival Canada-wide for seven days, with one day merging virtual and in-person events.

The festival will run from November 6 to 16, 2025.

VAFF29 marks a continued commitment to proactive diversity and inclusion, emphasizing transformative storytelling and practical empowerment.

The festival information will be announced in the fall of 2025.

Each year VAFF attracts close to 5,000 audience members over its 10-day festival and year-round events. It also reaches many more via word of mouth, pre-festival events, and traditional and social media throughout the year.

VAFF is mainly organized and produced by a group of dedicated volunteers, and is made possible by generous financial support from corporate sponsors, public funders, and private donors.

Artists

A number of successful Asian filmmakers first showcased their work at VAFF, including international visiting artists:

- Benson Lee (*Seoul Searching*)
- Evan Jackson Leong (*Linsanity*, *Snakehead*)

- Freida Lee Mock (*Return with Honor*)
- Jessica Yu (*Grey's Anatomy*)
- Justin Lin (*Fast & Furious*)
- Tze Chun (*Gotham*)
- Quentin Lee (*White Frog*)
- Ken Jeong, Jae Suh Park, Emerson Min (*A Great Divide*)

VAFF has also featured works from Canadian filmmakers:

- Ann Marie Fleming (*Window Horses*)
- Ben Lu (*Blood and Water*)
- Jason Karman (*Golden Delicious*)
- Jeff Chiba Stearns (*Mixed Match*)
- Julia Kwan (*Everything Will Be*)
- Kat Jayme (*The Grizzlie Truth*)
- Mina Shum (*Meditation Park*)
- Osric Chau (*Empty by Design*)
- Phil Planta (*Beyond Redemption*)
- Renuka Jeyapalan (*Stay the Night*)

Attending performers have included:

- Agam Darshi (*Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency*)
- Amy Park (*Alaska Daily*)
- Anastasia Lin (Miss World Canada)
- Edison Chen (*Infernal Affairs II*)
- Grace Park (*A Million Little Things*)
- Hudson Yang (*Fresh Off the Boat*)
- *Kung Fu* cast members
- Ludi Lin (*Mortal Kombat*)
- Leah Lewis (*Matlock, Elemental, The Tiger's Apprentice*)
- Olivia Cheng (*Warrior, Deadly Class, Marco Polo*)
- Paul Sun Hyung Lee (*Kim's Convenience, The Mandalorian, Ashoka*)
- Rizwan Manji (*The Dictator*)
- Sarita Choudhury (*The Hunger Games*)
- *Shogun* cast members
- Tzi Ma (*Interior Chinatown, Arrival*)
- Yvonne Chapman (*Avatar: The Last Airbender*)

Awards

VAFF is an **IMDB-eligible film festival and qualified Canadian film festival**. This means that all selections and awards can be added to your IMDB film listing.

Available awards include juried awards for **Best Canadian Short** and **Best Canadian Feature**, presented by Telefilm Canada; juried awards for **Best Director for Canadian Short** and **Best Director for Canadian Feature**, presented by the Directors' Guild of Canada, British Columbia; juried awards for **Best Cinematography for Canadian Short** and **Best Cinematography for Canadian Feature**; juried awards for **Best**

Editing for Canadian Feature, juried awards for **Best Animation for Canadian Short**. In 2023 we included **Best Canadian Documentary Short**, and **SHER VANCOUVER BEST 2SLGBTQ+ Short Film Award** and **Best International Short Award** and audience-voted **People's Choice Awards** for best **Overall Feature**, **Overall Short**, **Overall Performance for Feature** and for **Short**.

Programming/Industry

VAFF features up to **25 in person and virtual film programs** incorporating feature length and short films and videos (dramatic narrative, documentary, experimental, and animation) featuring an Artist/Concept Spotlight, International Spotlight, International and Canadian Shorts, Filmmakers Talk Series, the VAFF Industry Insight series including panel discussions, workshop and networking, and gala events.

How to Submit

- Open Call Submissions for VAFF29 are accepted from **February 15 to May 22, 2025**.
- Open Call Submissions can **ONLY** be made through **FilmFreeway** at VAFF.ORG. Questions regarding submissions can be emailed to: programming@vaff.org or submissions@vaff.org.

Eligibility

VAFF accepts:

- Independently produced films and videos by Asian North American artists (including Asian-Canadian or Asian-American artists), or
- Films or videos produced in **East Asia** (including People's Republic of China [incl. Hong Kong], Macao, North Korea, South Korea, Japan, Mongolia, Taiwan), **Southeast Asia** (including Myanmar [Burma], Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines, Singapore, Indonesia, Timor-Leste) **South Asia** (including Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh), or **West Asian-Canadian (permanent resident or citizen of Canada only)** (including **Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Yemen**) in English or with English subtitles.
- Films or videos produced must have at least one member of the creative team (director, writer, producer/production company or cinematographer) and at least one of the lead actors/subjects (if Documentary) self-identify as being of Asian or part-Asian heritage.
- Please specify how your submission meets our eligibility criteria above, in your submission notes/cover letter.
- If the country you are submitting from currently has a banking embargo, we recommend that you find friends/filmmakers in other countries to assist your

payment/submission. **No waivers will be offered**. Requests for waivers will not be accepted, so please do not send any.

- **Films and videos must have been completed after May 31st, 2023.** Submissions completed prior to this date will not be considered. **Films that have been previously submitted will not qualify for submission.**
- Films that have been self-distributed online, across all and any media platforms, **are ineligible.**
- **Current VAFF Board, Executive, and Committee members are not eligible to submit work in which they are key members of the cast and crew. Works involving key VAFF members will be eligible for consideration for Open Call Submission 12 months after departing from VAFF.**
- Films that were part of or screened at VAFF's own Mighty Asian Moviemaking Marathon (MAMM) Gala **will not** be considered in the Open Call process.
- Important note: In the initial submission phase DCP will not be acceptable. However, if the feature film is chosen for screening, filmmakers will later be given the option of sending in the DCP for that purpose.

Acceptable exhibition formats are as follows:

- Feature Films: Digital exhibition formats H.264 (.MOV or .MP4)/ProRes/DNxHD files; in HD resolution (1080 p or 2 K) at 23.98 frame rate. Audio in 5.1 surround (and or stereo if that is the only available mix). If possible, a Blu-ray disc for backup.
- Short Films: Digital exhibition formats H.264 (.MOV or .MP4)/ProRes/DNxHD files; in HD resolution (1080 p or 2 K) at 23.98 frame rate. No DCP Audio in 5.1 surround (and or stereo if that is the only available mix). If possible, a Blu-ray disc for backup.

Other exhibition formats, e.g. 16 mm, DVD, HDCam, Digibeta, or VHS, **cannot** be considered.

Right to Use:

- **All entries selected for the Festival grant VAFF the rights to use footage, stills, titles, and information as we deem appropriate for publicity and promotional purposes.**
- This requires:
The applicant must hold the necessary rights for the submission and exhibition of this work. The applicant agrees that if their title is selected, that any material including photographs and/or video submitted to VAFF may be used by the festival or a third party authorized by the festival for the purpose of promoting the festival (online, in print, and media).

Submission Deadlines

- Early bird deadline: **March 15, 2025**
- Regular deadline: **April 15, 2025**

- Final deadline: **May 22, 2025** (unless Open Call is officially extended by VAFF)
- *Open Call Submissions received after the Open Call deadline will not be considered for the 2025 festival. NO EXCEPTIONS.*

Entry Fees

- **FREE submissions** for **Canadian Shorts and Canadian Features** on the single day of **February 15, 2025 ONLY**
- **Early bird: USD 30 (Short), USD 40 (Feature), USD 40 (Feature Animation), USD 30 (Short Animation)**
- **Regular: USD 40 (Short), USD 50 (Feature), USD 50 (Feature Animation), USD 40 (Short Animation)**
- **Last chance: USD 60 (Short), USD 75 (Feature), USD 75 (Feature Animation), USD 60 (Short Animation)**
- Each film/video submitted must be accompanied by its own entry fee.
- **Open Call Submission fees cannot be waived. NO EXCEPTIONS.**
- **Any submission that does not meet the submission eligibility or criteria will be disqualified and no refund will be issued. Please read all submission requirements carefully.**
- Payment is accepted via credit card (preferred) or PayPal on FilmFreeway.

Other Fees

- **OPEN CALL SUBMISSION/ENTRY FEES: VAFF DOES NOT WAIVE ANY ENTRY FEES.**
- **SCREENING FEES:** VAFF is also committed to paying screening fees to films from Canadian/Canadian resident directors in selection. Eligible filmmakers will be notified of our fee structure if successful in selection. Any fees due will be paid post-festival. Please note we cannot pay fees for productions with filmmakers who are not Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada that are not based in Canada.
- **ARTIST FEES:** In fulfillment of its mandate, VAFF is provided with a small amount of public funding for artist fees to independent Asian Canadian artists only.

Film Categories

- Accepted film categories (submissions outside these categories will not be considered):
 - Narrative Feature (any genre)
 - Narrative Short (any genre)

- Documentary Feature
- Documentary Short
- Animation Feature and Shorts
- Web Shorts: Single episodes only (no less than 10 min, except for commercial videos and ads, music videos, previously broadcast television, and trailers)

Submission Materials

Preview Screeners: Digital Files

- Preview Screener Links are accepted for feature length (longer than 40 min TRT) and shorts (up to 40 min TRT).
- For FilmFreeway, you have the option of submitting a secure screener link or uploading directly online.

Marketing Materials:

All of the below marketing and press materials must be at your filmfreeway as part of the submission process.

The EPK should contain:

- A 100-word film synopsis and logline;
- Film stills for program guide and publicity:
 - No text on image
 - CMYK
 - JPG format
 - 3–4 MB
 - 4:3 aspect ratio in both
 - high resolution version: 300 dpi
 - digital resolution: 150 dpi
 - Photo credit
- Film poster (if available)
 - high resolution version: 300 dpi
 - digital resolution: 150 dpi
- An above-the-line cast and crew list
- About the Director(s)
 - Biography - max. 80 words
 - Headshot(s)
 - No text on image
 - CMYK
 - JPG format
 - 3–4 MB
 - high resolution version: 300 dpi
 - digital resolution: 150 dpi
 - Photo credit
- Press/publicity clippings
- A list of awards and screenings date (if available)
- Official website URL (if available)
- Social Media URL/handles

- Instagram
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Film Trailer
 - MP4 format
 - length: min. 30 sec; max. 1 min
 - A copy that can be download
 - A copy at the YouTube with public link (preferable)

Note: All marketing and press materials **MUST be** included with your filmfreeway submission. **DEADLINE: MAY 22, 2025.** If any of these items are not included, your submission will be disqualified and there will be **NO REFUND of entry fee.** **Please read the requirements carefully.**

Juried Awards: Qualifications

Overall

All adjudicated awards are given to eligible Canadian films only, including Best Canadian Short, Best Canadian Documentary Short, and Best Canadian Feature, Best Director for Canadian Short, Best Director for Canadian Documentary Short and Best Director for Canadian Feature, Best Cinematography for Canadian Short, Best Cinematography for Canadian Documentary Short, and Best Cinematography for Canadian Feature, Best Editing for Canadian Feature, and Best Animation for Canadian Short.

Some awards may include a cash prize if funding is available. To qualify for any of the above awards, filmmakers must meet the following criteria:

- The director, producer, or writer must be a Canadian citizen or Canadian resident;
- One of the key members (director, writer, producer, or cinematographer) or one of the lead actors/subjects (if a documentary) must self-identify as being of Asian or part Asian heritage.
- Both dramatic narrative and documentary genres are accepted.
- The film must be independently produced without majority funding from institutions (public or federal organizations, film schools, broadcasters, etc.).
- The film must not have been broadcast on television or have received commercial theatrical distribution prior to the festival screening.

The award winner will be determined by an adjudication panel of industry professionals and announced during VAFF29.

Best Canadian Short Award, Best Canadian Documentary Short Award

Best independent dramatic narrative/documentary short, primarily live action, 40 minutes or under by a Canadian filmmaker. For VAFF29, we will award a cash prize to the winner. To qualify, filmmakers must meet the following criteria:

- The director, producer, or writer must be a Canadian citizen or Canadian resident;
- The film must be under 40 minutes in length;
- The director must have final creative control of the work.

Best Canadian Feature Award

Best independent dramatic narrative/documentary feature, primarily live action, over 40 minutes by a Canadian filmmaker. For VAFF29, we will award a cash prize to the winner. To qualify, filmmakers must meet the following criteria:

- The director, producer or writer must be a Canadian citizen or Canadian resident;
- The film must be over 40 minutes in length;
- The director must have final creative control of the work.

Best Director for Canadian Short Award, Best Director for Canadian Documentary Short Award

Best independent dramatic narrative/documentary feature, primarily live action, 40 minutes or under by a Canadian filmmaker. For VAFF29, we will award a cash prize to the winner. To qualify, filmmakers must meet the following criteria:

- The director must be a Canadian citizen or Canadian resident;
- The film must be under 40 minutes in length;
- The director must have final creative control of the work.

Best Director for Canadian Feature Award

Best independent dramatic narrative/documentary feature, primarily live action, over 40 minutes by a Canadian filmmaker. For VAFF29, we will award a cash prize to the winner. To qualify, filmmakers must meet the following criteria:

- The director must be a Canadian citizen or Canadian resident;
- The film must be over 40 minutes in length;
- The director must have final creative control of the work.

Best Cinematography for Canadian Short Award, Best Cinematography for Canadian Documentary Short Award

Best independent dramatic narrative/documentary short, primarily live action, 40

minutes or under by a Canadian filmmaker. For VAFF29, we will award a cash prize to the winner. To qualify, filmmakers must meet the following criteria:

- The director, producer or writer must be a Canadian citizen or Canadian resident, but the Cinematographer does not need to be Canadian;
- The film must be under 40 minutes in length;
- The cinematographer must have full creative control of the cinematography.

Best Cinematography for Canadian Feature Award

Best independent dramatic narrative/documentary feature, primarily live action, over 40 minutes by a Canadian filmmaker. For VAFF29, we will award a cash prize to the winner. To qualify, filmmakers must meet the following criteria:

- The director, producer or writer must be a Canadian citizen or Canadian resident, but the Cinematographer does not need to be Canadian;
- The film must be over 40 minutes in length;
- The cinematographer must have full creative control of the cinematography.

Best Editing for Canadian Feature Award

Best independent dramatic narrative/documentary feature, primarily live action, over 40 minutes by a Canadian filmmaker. For VAFF29, we will award a cash prize to the winner. To qualify, filmmakers must meet the following criteria:

- The director and editor must be a Canadian citizen or Canadian resident;
- The film must be over 40 minutes in length;
- The director and editor must have final creative control of the work.

Best Animation for Canadian Short Award

Best independent dramatic animation short, 40 minutes or under by a Canadian filmmaker. For VAFF29, we will award a cash prize to the winner. To qualify, filmmakers must meet the following criteria:

- The director must be a Canadian citizen or Canadian resident;
- The film must be under 40 minutes in length;
- The director must have final creative control of the work.

All Shorts Award

SHER VANCOUVER BEST 2SLGBTQ+ Short Film Award

Best independent dramatic narrative short, primarily live action, 40 minutes or under by Canadian, American and International filmmakers. For VAFF29, we will award a cash prize to the winner. To qualify, filmmakers must meet the following criteria:

- The subject and content represent 2SLGBTQ+ category;
- The film must be under 40 minutes in length;

- The director must have final creative control of the work.

Best International Short Award

Best independent dramatic narrative/documentary short, primarily live action, 40 minutes or under by American and International filmmakers. For VAFF29, we will award a cash prize to the winner. To qualify, filmmakers must meet the following criteria:

- The award is open to all eligible films by filmmakers from all countries (except Canada);
- The film must be under 40 minutes in length;
- The director must have final creative control of the work.

People's Choice Awards

The People's Choice Awards are presented at the Closing Night Awards Ceremony November 16, 2025. The audience selects the best Overall Feature, Overall Short, and Overall Performance for Feature and for Short. Online voting will be open from November 6 through November 16 inclusive, throughout the November 2025 Festival.

- The award is open to all eligible films by filmmakers from all countries.

Notification of Festival Selection

- You will be notified of festival selections on or around the **mid- to late July, 2025**.
- If selected, a **Notice of Acceptance (NOA)** – including a request for additional press kit information and festival attendance RSVP – will be sent to you.
- **The NOA must be completed, signed, and returned by the deadline date listed in the NOA document, or your position in the festival may be offered to another film.**

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

1. The following Terms and Conditions govern the applicant's submission of their film/video to the Vancouver Asian Film Festival (hereinafter referred to as "VAFF"). To the extent these Terms and Conditions are inconsistent with any other document prepared by VAFF or anyone else with respect to VAFF, these Terms and Conditions will take precedence. Any questions about these Terms and Conditions should be directed to submissions@vaff.org.
2. By submitting the applicant's film/video to VAFF, the applicant confirms that they have:
 - (a) read, understood, and agreed to all the VAFF submission rules and information as stated on FilmFreeway and the published PDF document, including, but not limited to these Terms and Conditions (collectively hereinafter referred to as the "Submission Rules"); and
 - (b) obtained consent from any and all owners, creators, writers, producers, and/or other authorized representatives or rights holders of the film/video whose consent is required to submit their film/video to VAFF.
3. Submission fees are in USD and are **NON-REFUNDABLE**.
4. VAFF is under no obligation to contact the applicant should the applicant not have adhered to the Submission Rules.
5. *VAFF may disqualify or reject, but is not required to do so, any submission that it determines, in its sole and absolute discretion would not be in VAFF's best interest to include in the festival, including, but not limited to, any film/video that is not in compliance, in whole or in part, with these Terms and Conditions, and may do so without refunding any submission or other fees you paid or returning any materials you submitted. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, if any person connected to the film/video is involved in, or alleged to be involved in, any situation or occurrence which subjects such person to public scandal, disrepute, widespread contempt, or public ridicule, that violates VAFF's Code of Conduct, or that will tend to shock, insult, or offend the community, public morals, or decency, or prejudice VAFF in general, then VAFF has the right, in its sole discretion, to take any action it*

deems appropriate, including but not limited to excluding such person from attending VAFF and/or disqualifying the film/video from participation in festival.

6. *By submitting the film/video to VAFF, the applicant hereby warrants and confirms that:*
 - (a) *the film/video is wholly original, is not copied from, and does not include any other work that is the subject of copyright or other protection, unless such work is in the public domain or the applicant has obtained any and all consents, releases, licenses, and other authorizations or waivers of any kind necessary for the inclusion or reproduction of any person, character, location, thing, trademark, sound recording, musical composition, or other work in the film/video;*
 - (b) *the film/video does not defame any person or violate the common law or statutory rights, including, without limitation, the rights of privacy and publicity or any other right of any person;*
 - (c) *the film/video is not the subject of litigation or any dispute that may give rise to litigation;*
 - (d) *there are no agreements, nor will there be any agreements made subsequent to the date of this film/video submission, that would or could have the effect of impairing the applicant's ability to provide the film/video as contemplated herein, or otherwise conflict with any provision of the Submission Rules; and*
 - (e) *the applicant has the full right, power, and authority to submit the film/video to VAFF for the festival's consideration, and to grant all of the rights granted hereunder including, without limitation, the right to screen the film/video in the VAFF venues and/or digitally on VAFF's online screening platform, and there is no prior obligation or impediment which would in any way impair or restrict the applicant from fully performing all obligations pursuant to the submission and these Terms and Conditions.*

7. *The applicant agrees to indemnify and hold harmless VAFF, its licensees, successors, and assigns, and its and their members, officers, directors, employees, agents, representatives, associates, volunteers, and affiliates (each hereinafter referred to as an "Indemnified Party"), from any claim, suit, action, or other proceeding brought against an Indemnified Party and from any losses, costs, or damages, including the Indemnified Party's full legal fees and costs, which it may have suffered or incurred or may suffer or incur, directly or indirectly based on, in connection with, or arising from the use and exhibition of the film/video submitted by the applicant, including, without limitation, the decision to exhibit or not exhibit the film/video, which decision is in VAFF's sole and absolute discretion, or the breach or alleged breach of any representation, warranty, or other agreement made by the applicant in the applicant's FilmFreeway registration form for VAFF or these Terms and Conditions.*

8. *VAFF takes reasonable anti-piracy and security precautions. By submitting a film/video to VAFF, the applicant hereby releases VAFF from any and all liability in*

the event of theft, unauthorized access, or copying, or any breach of copyright of the film while it is in VAFF's possession or on VAFF's online screening platform.

9. *VAFF reserves the right to rule, in its sole and absolute discretion, on cases and situations not foreseen by these Terms and Conditions.*

Exhibition Screeners: Digital Files

- Send a digital file download link to printtraffic@vaff.org.
- The instruction for the upload link to the virtual screening platform will be sent directly to the submitter.

Exhibition Screeners: DCP

- The instruction for the DCP film format will be sent directly to the submitter.

Exhibition Screeners: Hard Copy Shipping Policy and Guidelines

- **Ship exhibition prints (Blu-ray or DCP) to VAFF, prepaid, to arrive no later than September 25, 2025.**
- If exhibition prints/files are coming from other festivals, VAFF must receive print traffic contact information of the prior festival no less than three weeks prior to VAFF's start date.
- If VAFF is to send the exhibition print/file to another film festival, this outbound address must be given to VAFF one week prior to the start of VAFF or it will be sent back to the print source.
- Exhibition prints/files can be mailed or couriered to:

Print Traffic Coordinator
Vancouver Asian Film Festival
#210-10271 Shellbridge Way
Richmond, BC, V6X 2W8
Canada

- The filmmaker is responsible for providing any required paperwork for the shipping of their films, particularly those coming from outside of Canada.
- VAFF typically pays for only the return or outbound shipping costs of the screening film/video. Inbound shipping charges will be covered by print source or preceding film festivals. If by special arrangement VAFF pays for inbound shipping, the outbound shipping cost must be covered by the print source or the forwarding contact/festival.
- VAFF does not insure the films during the festival or during shipping. This is the filmmaker's responsibility. VAFF takes no responsibility for loss or damage to films in transit.
- Do not send the original or your only copy of your film/video.
- If shipping a disc or hard drive/thumb drive, use bubble wrap envelopes or stiff cardboard backing rather than fiber-filled packages or envelopes.

- Please ensure the file/print is playable before sending to VAFF. Please also include any relevant screening notes with your film, if possible.
- Please label your films as “For cultural and educational purposes only”.
- If the film is coming from outside of Canada, please identify on the package that it is a temporary importation and that the films will be returned to the original country.
- If your film is being shipped from outside of Canada and you are declaring the value of your film as above CAD 20, this may delay your film at Canada customs, so please send it two weeks earlier than planned.
- Always use a tracking number, regardless of whether the film is sent by post office or courier. If you are sending by a courier, we recommend using FedEx. Many filmmakers have encountered border delay issues and poor or lack of communication with UPS.
- Any costs incurred by VAFF as a result of the filmmaker not following the provided shipping guidelines may result in charges to the filmmaker to recover these costs.

Queries: Contact Information

- Programming/curation: programming@vaff.org
- Submissions: submissions@vaff.org
- Notice of Acceptance (NOA) will be sent out by Festival Attendance/Liaison on or around mid July 2025
- Print Traffic (contact only after August 15, 2025): printtraffic@vaff.org
- Any enquiries should be addressed to programming@vaff.org after September 15, 2025