



# ***Scene in San Francisco***

Incentive Program

File No. 251225

Film SF | Budget & Finance Committee  
January 14, 2026

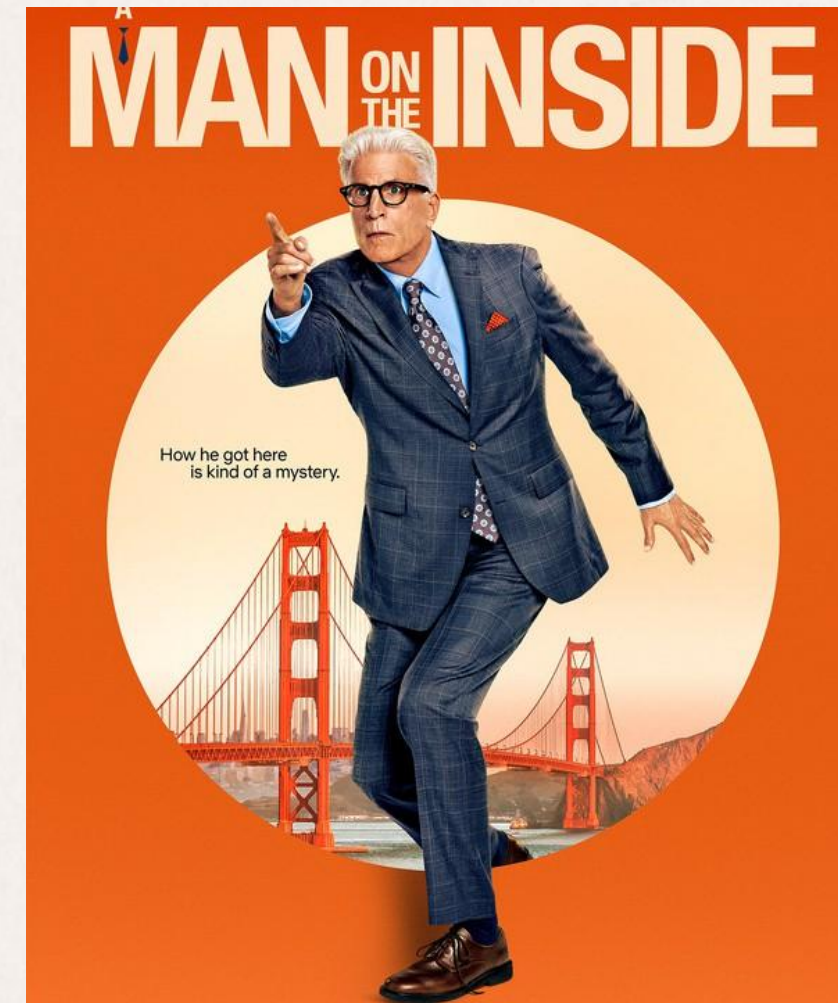


# Film SF

Film SF | San Francisco Film Commission champion filming in San Francisco to support a diversity of storytellers and our thriving production community.

We attract productions to our cinematic city to stimulate economic development, create jobs, and market San Francisco on the global stage.

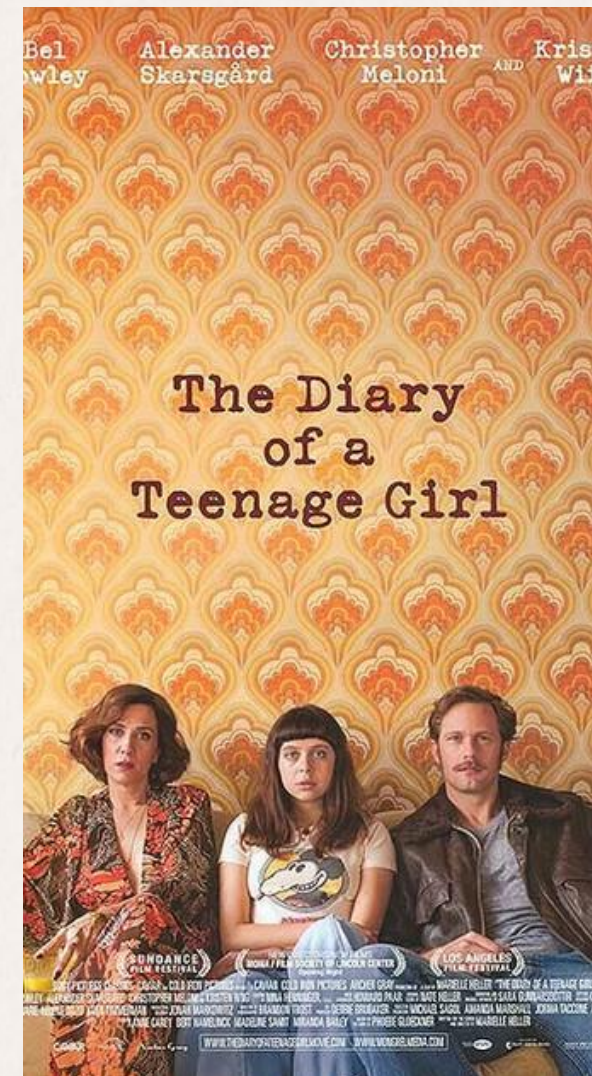
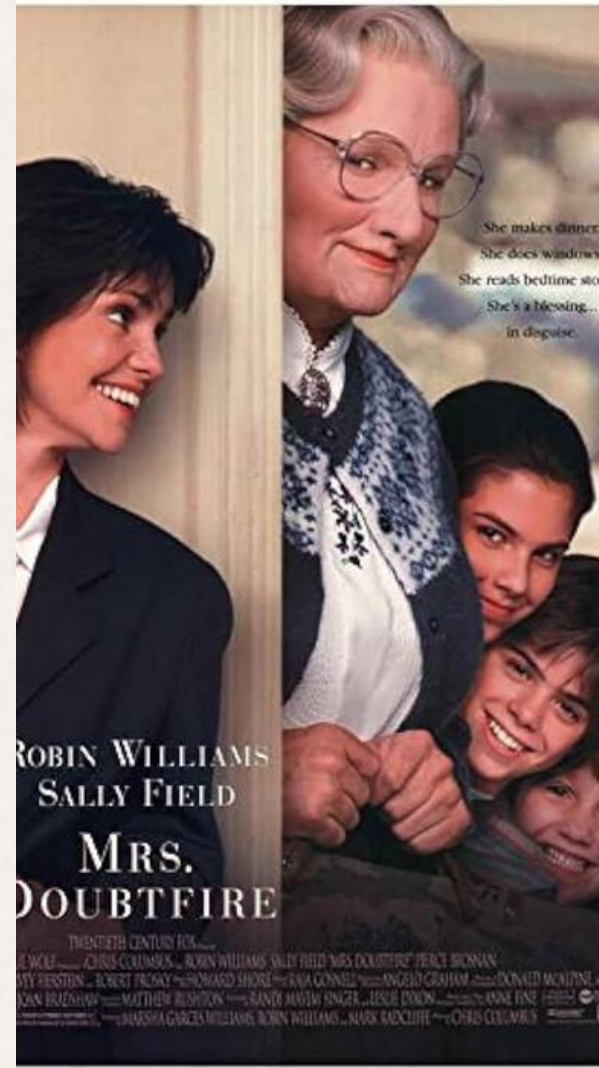
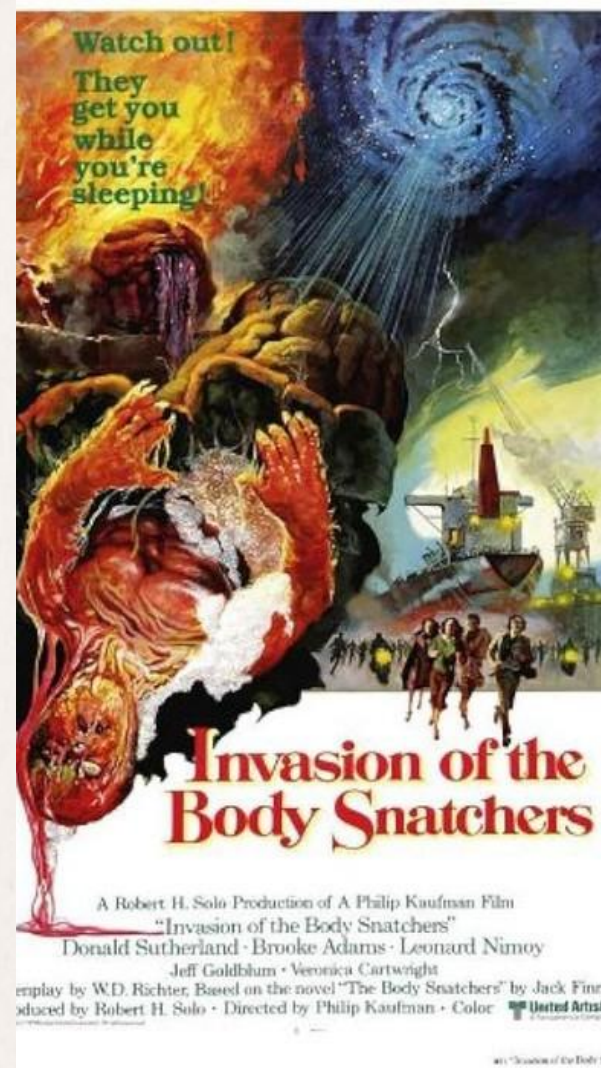
Our vision is a city that embraces and invests in storytellers and entices productions to call San Francisco their home.





# History

San Francisco is one of the most cinematic cities in the world, known for its iconic landmarks, vibrant film industry, classics like *Vertigo*, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, and *Mrs. Doubtfire*, and moving independent stories such as *The Last Black Man in San Francisco* and *The Diary of a Teenage Girl*.





# Industry Data

- A single production can inject millions of dollars into the local economy through direct spending on wages, services, rentals, location fees, catering, transportation, lodging, and more.<sup>1</sup>
- The average location shoot adds \$670,000 & 1,500 jobs a day into the local economy.<sup>2</sup>





# Industry Data

In California, the motion picture and television industry is directly responsible for more than **258,860+ jobs**, including **\$42.6+ billion in wages**, **165,570+ jobs** related to production, **93,290+ jobs** related to distributing movies, television and other video content to consumers, and **816,580+ jobs** including indirect and induced impact on local vendors and other businesses.<sup>3</sup>





# Current Incentive Program

## History

Since 2006, we've rebated over **\$7.6 million** to **48** productions, generating **\$95.5 million** in local spending.

## ROI

For every dollar rebated, productions have spent **\$12.50** locally.

## Hires

**16,062** local crew + actors employed  
(IATSE Local 16, Teamsters 2785, and SAG-AFTRA).

## Workforce Development

**219** First Source hires.

## Wages

**\$26.3 million** in wages paid to local SF crew and talent.

## Spend

**\$69.1 million** on goods and services including gas, hotels, car rentals, location fees, office supplies, equipment, catering, and more.



# Challenge



**No significant change to the program since its inception.**

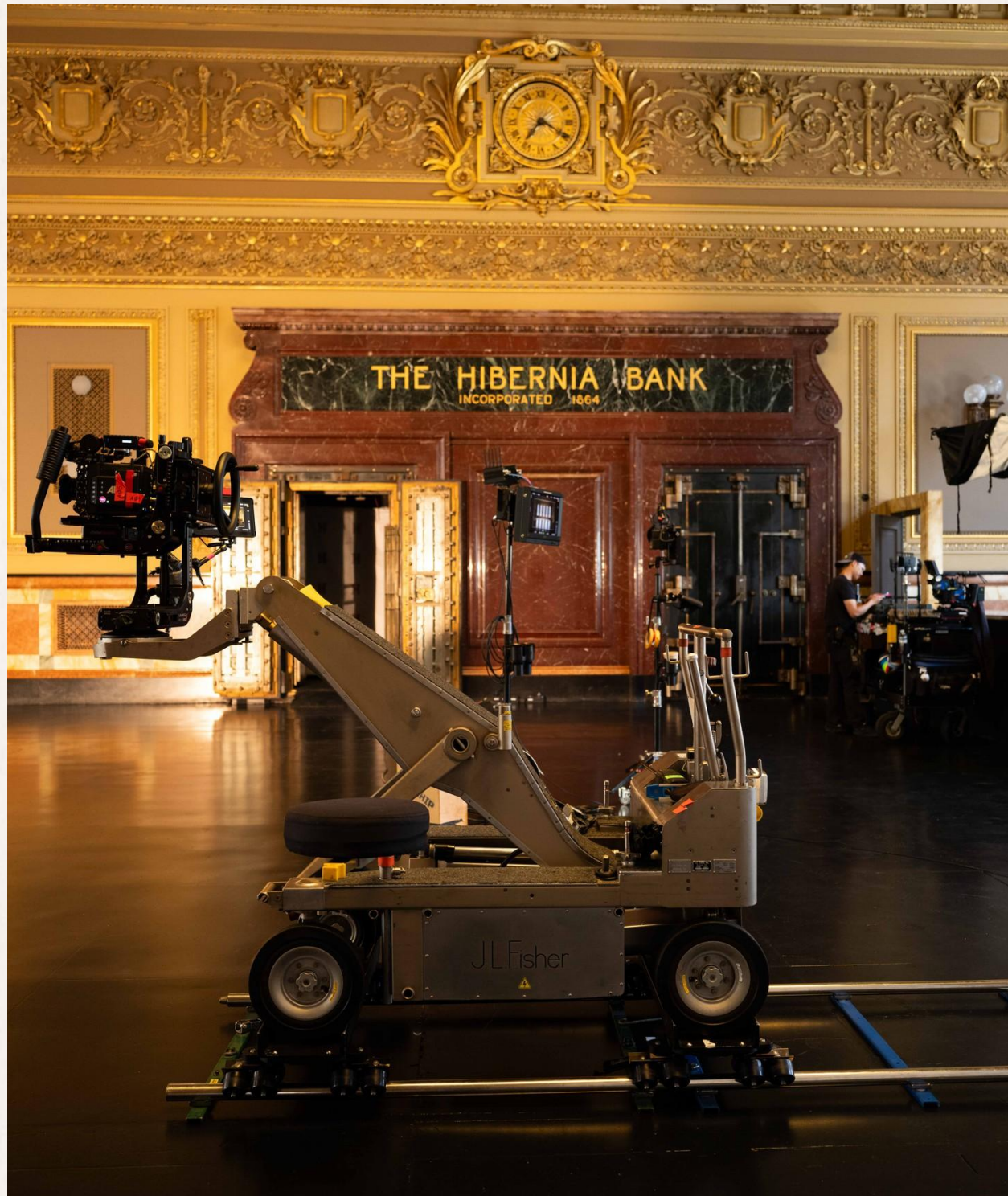
- Antiquated and not competitive in the incentive-driven industry.
- Over 120 incentives globally competing for productions.

**Current Incentive is limited.**

- Rebates city fees only and capped at \$600k - does not significantly influence major studio decisions.
- No minimum local spend requirement.
- Requirement to shoot 55–65% of a project in SF is unrealistic and impractical.



# Challenge



## Fails to attract major large-scale productions and TV series

- The last major production that used our incentive was Hulu's *Chance* in FY16-17 (TV Series) and *Jexi* in FY18-19 (Studio Feature).

## Lack of infrastructure development

- Without consistent major production activity we cannot secure investment in a dedicated production stage and other business opportunities.

## Significant production runaway.

- Productions choose to film in regions with more attractive incentives.
- Productions only shoot in SF for limited periods of time, if at all, even when the projects are set in SF.



# Updated Program Structure



## ***Scene in San Francisco* Incentive Program – At a Glance**

Category	Details
Minimum Spend	\$500,000 in San Francisco \$250,000 for low-budget projects up to \$3M
Production Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Minimum 5 days of principal photography in SF</li><li>- Production office must be located in SF</li></ul>
Rebate Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 10% rebate on qualified SF spend up to \$1M</li><li>- 20% rebate on qualified SF spend above \$1M</li><li>- 100% rebate on City agency fees (permits, police, real estate)</li></ul>
Eligible Expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Wages paid to SF residents (capped at \$100K per individual)</li><li>- Goods/services from SF-based businesses (including post-production)</li></ul>
Maximum Rebate	\$1 million per project
Eligible Project Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Feature Films</li><li>- TV and Web Series (episodes and pilots)</li><li>- Documentaries</li></ul>



# Expected Outcomes

## **San Francisco Spend**

Incentivizes expenditure in San Francisco supporting local restaurants, hotels, and small businesses, and generating increased tax revenue.

## **Boost in Production Activity**

Draws large-scale production resulting in an increase in business, local spend and hires, and long-term industry presence and growth.

## **Screen Tourism**

Leads to enhanced destination marketing and a boost in tourism contributing positively to San Francisco's image and perception.

## **New Business**

Attracts investment in infrastructure development including a dedicated production stage, equipment rentals, and other production facilities.

## **Job Creation & Workforce Development**

Increases employment and skills development opportunities that lead to consistent jobs for locals crew and creatives.



# Additional Administrative Code Changes 1/2

## **Daily Use Fees**

Exemptions now include 501(c)(4) and 501(c)(6) organizations.

## **Film Notification Guidelines**

Film Commission will maintain and amend notification guidelines based on impact.

## **Rebate - Documentary Length**

Clarification that documentaries must now be feature length to qualify.

## **Rebate - Qualified Production Cost**

Film Commission will create and maintain guidelines on qualifying costs.

## **Rebate - Taxes**

Taxes are no longer a qualified expenditure.

## **Rebate - Production Cost**

“Under a revenue sharing agreement” captures facilities that are either City-owned or have a revenue sharing agreement with the third-party operator.



# Additional Administrative Code Changes 2/2

## **Rebate - SFPD**

Previous cap on officers now removed.

## **Rebate - Third Party Property**

Third-party property owners for film-related activities may qualify, provided there is no suitable City alternative.

## **Rebate - Skills Training**

Production skills training for San Francisco residents now required (First Source Hiring Program remains).

## **Rebate - On-Screen Credits**

On-screen credit and promotional materials now formally required.

## **Rebate - Real Estate**

More flexibility in the types of facilities that qualify (e.g. SFUSD). Monthly rent amount raised from \$5,000 to \$15,000 per RED policy.

## **Merchandise**

Now authorized to license and sell merch.



# Conclusion

These updates **modernize** and **better position San Francisco** as competitive within the incentive-driven industry.

This legislation **strengthens the city's creative economy**, supports local **businesses and workers**, and allows San Francisco to **compete globally**.







# Contact

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