



# Documentary Filmmaker

**SALARY RANGE (2018):** Will depend on numerous factors.<sup>i</sup>

I am the director, editor and scriptwriter of documentary films. Although I often work with others, such as researchers, camera crews and experts in various fields to help my work reach its full potential, I am still the person responsible for making sure that interviews, shooting and edits remain smooth. It is up to me to analyze, gather and translate complex information into a film that is entertaining and comprehensible, all the while maintaining the core message of the documentary. I seek to educate and inform in an interesting way. I also understand the complicated funding landscape so I can finance and distribute my work.

**The Tip:** Documentary filmmaking is not only about having a story to tell. It is about having the resources to tell this story. Your greatest skill will be persuading others that they want to invest time, money and their influence to tell your story.

## PRIORITY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:

Expert	Great at	Good at
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to develop a compelling narrative</li> <li>Ability to develop evidence-based content</li> <li>Ability to generate new approaches to familiar stories</li> <li>Expertise in verbal and written use of language</li> <li>Research</li> <li>Visual and audio recording and editing</li> <li>Ability to pitch ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Production planning &amp; design</li> <li>Manage projects</li> <li>Apply expertise in <b>media-focused subject areas</b> (current affairs, sports, entertainment, weather)</li> <li>Data analytics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Execute a promotional strategy</li> <li>Ability to monetize content</li> <li>Link content with a <b>specific audience</b></li> </ul>

## BUILDING BLOCK EXPERIENCES:

<p><b>Education &amp; Learning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bachelor of Communication (English) with minors in film studies and policy studies</li> <li>Did a year of studies at Vancouver Film School</li> </ul>	<p>I discovered my passion for longer-form storytelling in film early on. Doing my minor in film studies exposed me to a range of genres.</p>
--	---

<p><b>Employment Experiences:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed my first documentary in high school on the challenges facing transgender students. Won young director award at our local film festival, which included a scholarship.</li> <li>In university, I started a filmmaker club and</li> </ul>	<p>I am not a nine-to-five person. I've always created my own job. I view my work as simply another classroom. This started with my first documentary while I was still in high school and continued into university, where I started a filmmaker's club. For all these activities, I needed to learn how to secure financing to see the project through. These projects</p>
--	--

<p>secured a grant from a local production company. The club completed a documentary with two professors, on the future of education when life expectancy hits 100. Film was nominated at <u>Hot Docs</u> and was part of <u>Docx</u>, a section of the festival for <u>non-traditional films</u>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Today, I am the principal of my documentary filmmaking company. I operate from project to project and keep a lean organization.</u></li> </ul>	<p>contributed to winning scholarships to support my educational goals. At this stage in my career, I thrive on the risk and reward of being an independent documentary filmmaker. My professional success is rooted in my talent and commitment.</p>
<p><b>Community Experiences:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm on the board of the Alberta chapter of <u>Documentary Organization of Canada</u> (Doc AB)</li> <li>• Volunteer at local <u>Underground Film Festival</u></li> <li>• Active in a local screenwriting club since age 17</li> </ul>	<p>I volunteer with people and organizations that understand the power of storytelling (through images, words and music) to change people's lives and galvanize community action. Discovering the screenwriting club when I was 17 changed my world. I met "my people" and they inspired me to pursue a career in filmmaking.</p>
<p><b>Contextual Experiences:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During university, I created a multimedia portfolio which included text, video, graphic design, a comic strip, a podcast-style interview, a short story, a print ad, a colouring book and a personal brand book</li> </ul>	<p>Being an independent filmmaker is about finding others who will invest in your dream. They are investing first and foremost in me. This requires me to have compelling evidence that I will do what I say I will do. My body of work does this today.</p>
<p><b>Relationships:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A university professor became my mentor and friend. She brought me into a creative group of friends interested in film, music, writing, design and art.</li> <li>• Being involved in Hot Docs opened my network and my world to potential collaborators and partners</li> </ul>	<p>My network is my inspiration. I hang with creative people who challenge each other constantly. This makes me a bigger thinker and a better filmmaker.</p>

---

<sup>1</sup> Documentary filmmaker's income will vary based on a number of factors. Please see the following for additional information: <http://work.chron.com/salary-freelance-filmmaker-4462.html>