

Niagara Film Office (NFO)



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Two Niagara area champions have continued to make progress since January, 2024 towards the launch of a Film Office in Niagara. Peter Donato and Nigel Napier-Andrews.

In June, 2023 the Niagara Economic Development Team under the leadership and direction of the Regional Municipality released a comprehensive report identifying six growth areas for the Region to focus on in the next ten years. Film and Television was on this list. This report cost \$86,000 and was collaborated by Deloitte.

“The Development of a Niagara Film Office could help and advocate for the Region, manage a local fund and run the concierge service. Its evolution would be an indication that the Niagara region is properly and professionally invested in this sector.

Ontario Film Market

In 2022, the film and television industry in Ontario contributed \$3.15 billion to the economy, a record high. 419 productions helped create over 45,000 jobs. This was a record-breaking year for the industry.

In 2023, 404 productions contributed \$1.8 billion to the economy, creating 25,862 jobs. This was a decrease from 2022 due to labor strikes in the US.

Ontario is a global leader in film and television production, hosting over 300 productions annually. The industry is supported by a variety of factors, including: A diverse talent pool, A range of film-friendly locations, Financial incentives, Studio space expansion, and Robust health and safety protocols.

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Media and Awareness - NFO

July, 2024 – The Local NOTL, Pelham Today

<https://www.notllocal.com/local-news/notl-resident-business-owner-pushing-for-a-niagara-film-office-9195139>

October 2024 – Newstalk 610 am
(radio)

<https://www.610cktb.com/news/pair-hopes-to-create-a-niagara-film-office-to-attract-productions-to-the-region.html>

January, 2025 – Niagara Now, Thorold

<https://niagaranow.com/news.phtml/niagaras-million-dollar-miss-advocates-rally-for-regional-film-office/>

Sample of Recent Productions in the Niagara Region (2000's to current)

- Handmaid's Tale – 2020, 2022 (TV Series, multiple episodes)
- IT – Chapter Two (Feature Film, Horror)
- Hardy Boys TV Show
- Amazing Race Canada, Seasons 1, 9, 10 (2012, 2023, 2024)
- Hallmark Romance MOW – Falling in Love in Niagara (2024)
- The Shape of Water – Feature Film
- Blue's Brothers (Feature Film)
- Superman 2, The Dead Zone (Stephen King), Pirates of the Caribbean, “Niagara (Marilyn Monroe - vintage films since 1950)
- 911 Killer (2024 – Episode)
- All Around Champion – Season 6 (Cricket Episode)

Growing List of Niagara Supporters

- Terry Ugolini – Mayor of Thorold
- Gary Zalepa – Lord Mayor of NOTL
- Kathy Weiss – Chamber of Commerce - NOTL
- CAO and Tourism Department – Town of Lincoln
- City of Niagara Falls (Councillor)
- Dean Spironello – Niagara Falls E.D.
- Various media outlets including The Local, Niagara News, radio stations and journalists.

Comparison to other ONTARIO Film Offices

- **Hamilton** – created in earnest in 2007, in 2022 173 productions generated **\$73 million dollars** in economic activity. 900 film permits were issued and 9,000 locals claim to work in the Industry
- **London** – Entering 4th year of existence, started with a 3-year pilot under the London Economic Development Corp (LEDC) Arm and **\$300,000 annual operating** budget. Locations Database of 170+ places, 140 Crew Members, 165 performers and 85 resources
- **Kingston** – 2024 economic development from Film and Television was tagged at \$2.6 million dollars, 3 f/t staff work under the Tourism Kingston department
- **Mississauga** — now picking up many productions leaving Toronto due to scarce studio supply, traffic and rising costs to shoot

NFO Goals and Outcome(s)

- Our goal is to finish our business plan and prepare a thorough summary with financial projections of what a successful Film Office would look like
- Once ready we would pitch the Regional Chair to present our case to Council
- We aim to generate more letters of support, more data and facts to build our case and in 2025 secure the funding necessary to launch an office
- Our short term plan to raise funds would be to host a Fundraiser in May or June at a winery or suitable venue
- Any monies raised would go towards a student project to help with the research needed to complete an accurate business plan

What does a Film Office Do?

- A film office most importantly acts as a quick resource for a variety of needs from film and tv productions looking to shoot here, or already coming and they need support almost always throughout their visit
- Any and all staff on a Film Office team need to be 100% all-in regarding their roles, passionate about film and television, have a thorough understanding of all the key crew roles and generally lots of experience on a variety of different sets and productions, as they must know the "lingo" in as many areas as possible
- Permits are quickly issued and in this case the Niagara Film Office could be the placeholder of ALL 12 region permits assuming everyone had some unique features, so we could quickly distribute these and also e-introduce anyone with an introduction where applicable and to save time and not waste communication

What does a Film Office Do?

- A film office website provides accurate, up to date contact information (staff), lists of accredited resources (such as catering companies, car and equipment rental organizations, maybe a breakdown and list of the top hotels and room numbers with production office sizes)
- In the case of Niagara with so many regional offices where applicable the NFO staff could list the right, direct contact to call if for example it was a production wanting access to NOTL and we knew that the Events Person at the Town was the first, best key contact
- Manages a thorough and extensive private directory of all Niagara based Crew, Contractors, Companies and Individuals who count themselves as members of the Industry and have worked even a few shifts on any type of production(s) taking place locally or elsewhere; the goal of a Film Office is to quickly connect a production with local talent, where applicable

What does a Film Office Do?

- Markets and Expands a HUGE list of verified and active locations, currently on Ontario Creates there are 86 Niagara based locations, this should be 886 (!), but more importantly it's active, current and vetted to be accurate and reasonable whether it's City or Municipal properties or private locations, so this one area results in almost daily monitoring, as owners change hands, listings are updated, added, removed and/or new photos replace older ones, etc.
- This role is critical as many productions search here first and if not enough places, ideas and parameters are presented at this step many productions don't even take next steps but rather look elsewhere
 - Lobbies, markets and conducts outreach on a regular basis to production companies known to be favorable to Ontario to convince the key decision makers to consider Niagara over other markets
- By comparison Hamilton has over 350 locations listed and is almost 2x smaller by square area

Contact Info



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