

Governor Phil Murphy

photo: view of NJ Trenton DOM

ICYMI: New Jersey Film and Television Industry Shattered Records in 2021

12/21/2022

\$500 million investment shows the industry is proving to be a boon for state and local economies

NEWARK – Film and television production in New Jersey shattered all previous records in 2021, with the industry spending more than a half of a billion dollars in the state and creating more than 5,500 jobs.

The annual report released by the state's Film and Television Commission this month shows the industry bested its previous spending record by nearly \$80 million. In total, New Jersey was home to 725 productions in 2021, including 68 feature films and 132 television series.

"We believe that between our variety of locations, the quality and diversity of our workforce and best-in-class tax credit, New Jersey is exploding as a destination for film and television production. After four very successful years, we now look forward to an influx of major studios that will position New Jersey as the premier shooting location on the East Coast," **said Governor Phil Murphy**, who signed the New Jersey Film and Digital Media Tax Credit program into law in 2018 to encourage film and television studios and productions to choose New Jersey.

Since 2018, when the state adopted the current credit administered by the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA), total spending by production companies in the Garden State has grown by 647 percent, hitting a record \$501 million in 2021. The total spend by the industry encompasses all aspects of filming, including salaries, equipment and location rental, and catering costs.

"Since day one of this Administration, it has been our mission to create a thriving film and television industry. Thanks to the film and digital media tax credit program and our efforts to raise awareness of all New Jersey has to offer, our state is now experiencing a boom in our film and television industry," **said First Lady Tammy Murphy**. "We will continue to work every day to maintain this positive trend and attract as many productions to our great state as possible."

In addition to the revenue from the boost in productions, filming in New Jersey has been a boon to the job market.

Films that took advantage of the credit, which provides up to 35 percent of qualified film production expenses, created a total of 5,529 jobs throughout the state, including positions such as Location Managers, Production Managers, Line Producers, Screenwriters, Production Designers, Set Decorators, Costume Designers, and Wardrobe Assistants.

"New Jersey's film and digital media tax credit is without question one of the best in the nation and has spurred growth in this industry by more than 600 percent over the past four years," **said Tim Sullivan, Chief Executive Officer of the NJEDA**. "We believe the best is yet to come as major studios throughout the U.S. discover the state's ideal combination of top talent, logistical advantages, and vast array of settings. They will also find that their budgets go much further by setting up shop in New Jersey, especially considering our scalable, robust incentive offerings."

The record-setting spending offers the cities and towns where filming takes place enormous benefits.

For example, Cranford has hosted several productions including Bros, The Plot Against America and Maybe I Do and has seen the positive financial benefits of the film industry in town. **Cranford Theater owner Doreen Sayegh** has benefitted, with both the inside and outside of the theater being used as a movie set. Her theater recently was the staging area for cast and crew during the filming of "Bros."

"As a business owner in Cranford, I've seen a huge benefit from filming in the township," Sayegh said. "I'm a big believer that filming brings economic value not only to our state but our local communities. Filming has brought a great sense of solidarity to the community and has offered an opportunity to expose our great town as well as boost the morale of our business owners who witness the increase in foot traffic."

Nick Palladino of Palladino's Market in Atco, Camden County, was asked to cater breakfast for a crew filming nearby and ended up providing morning meals for about two weeks. The business, Palladino said, was a nice shot in the arm.

"It was a really cool experience," Palladino said. "We got to do something completely out of our realm. It helps the business and it's a cool experience."

Kevin Brennan, owner of Track Five Coffee in downtown Cranford, said having film crews in town is great for business.

"It creates a really great buzz in town, not just from the crews but also from residents who get pretty excited and will come out to see who's here filming," Brennan said. "That's a real boon for business because anytime there are people in downtown, we have a good shot at bringing them in. Anything that brings people out is generally going to be a plus because it increases the foot traffic."

Brennan said while seeing Hollywood stars in town has become almost commonplace, he has had some memorable brushes with fame, including a few years back when New Jersey native Anne Hathaway was featured in a newspaper profile holding a coffee cup from Track Five.

Dante Longhi, owner of Dream Factory Balloons in Kenilworth, said he also got some fantastic advertising for his business when a balloon structure he made appeared in the Film Bros.

"Working with the film companies has really helped spread the word about our business," said Longhi, adding that his company was discovered by a film industry employee after he provided balloon superheroes to an event in downtown Cranford. "So, we not only get paid by the studio, but we get advertising also. It's a great experience."

Some of the features shot in New Jersey in 2021 include Vietnam story "The Greatest Beer Run Ever," cult horror film remake "Goodnight Mommy" and highly acclaimed fright-film "Smile."


While 2021 was a record-setting year, the industry in New Jersey is not resting on those accolades. The state is on track to break last year's spending record in 2022.

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"In 2021, New Jersey's motion picture and television industry completely recovered from the worldwide production shutdown of 2020, and the state hosted a very exciting array of prestigious features and television programs, starring some of the biggest names in the entertainment industry," said **Steve Gorelick, Executive Director of the New Jersey Motion Picture and Television Commission**. "This year has been another exciting year in film and television and it's looking like we're going to soar past 2021."

About the New Jersey Economic Development Authority

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) serves as the state's principal agency for driving economic growth. The NJEDA is committed to making New Jersey a national model for inclusive and sustainable economic development by focusing on key strategies to help build strong and dynamic communities, create good jobs for New Jersey residents, and provide pathways to a stronger and fairer economy. Through partnerships with a diverse range of stakeholders, the NJEDA creates and implements initiatives to enhance the economic vitality and quality of life in the state and strengthen New Jersey's long-term economic competitiveness.

To learn more about NJEDA resources for businesses, call NJEDA Customer Care at 609-858-6767 or visit <https://www.njeda.com> (<https://www.njeda.com>) and follow @NewJerseyEDA on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

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