

**HOT DOCS TO COMMISSION TEN SHORT DOCUMENTARIES FROM FILMMAKERS
ACROSS CANADA FOR NEW *CITIZEN MINUTES* PROJECT**

Toronto, October 7, 2020 – Hot Docs is pleased to announce the *Citizen Minutes* project, a new documentary initiative to inspire interest and engagement in Canadian democracy and public affairs. The Project will commission ten original short and micro documentaries from Canadian filmmakers that will explore and celebrate stories of civic participation in communities across the country. The selected films will premiere at the 2021 Hot Docs Festival. *Citizen Minutes* will also feature an educational component, with Hot Docs developing complementary resources linked to curricula to enable educators to use the films as teaching tools.

“Documentary storytelling has the power to spotlight the extraordinary efforts of ordinary people affecting positive change, and Hot Docs’ *Citizen Minutes* project will support our filmmakers in exploring these important, and often untold, community stories,” said **Brett Hendrie**, executive director of Hot Docs. “Being an engaged citizen is more important now than ever, so we’re proud to embark on this special project to inspire a greater understanding of our diverse society through documentary.”

From an open call for submissions, ten projects will be chosen by an internal Hot Docs selection committee and produced by two creative co-producers: Lisa Jackson, producer, Door Number 3 Productions, and Lauren Grant, producer, Clique Pictures. Assisting in the creative process will be an external advisory council comprised of community leaders who will act as story advisors during the filmmaking process.

“In these challenging times, our interconnectedness and the importance of community has come into sharp relief,” said **Lisa Jackson**, creative co-producer of *Citizen Minutes*. “In highlighting stories of citizenship in action, these films will inspire hope and engagement with each other and the world around us.”

“I’m thrilled to be working with Hot Docs to shine a spotlight on stories of civic engagement and healthy democracy,” said **Lauren Grant**, creative co-producer of *Citizen Minutes*. “The need for active citizen engagement is of paramount importance right now as we continue to witness unprecedented attacks on democracy around the world.”

Selected projects will receive financial, production and post-production support, in addition to potential mentorship opportunities. Micro docs will range from one to two minutes and shorts will be between two and eight minutes. Hot Docs aims to be more diverse and inclusive and encourages directors who are Black, Indigenous, People of Colour, and people of all ages, genders, sexual orientations and disabilities to apply. Applicants must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada. Applications will be evaluated based on feasibility, creative merit, audience, and fit with the mandate.

Submissions open today and close on October 28, with final selections chosen by the end of November. On Tuesday, October 13, Hot Docs will be hosting a webinar Q&A with the creative co-producers to answer any questions applicants may have. To submit a film idea, please visit www.hotdocs.ca/citizenminutes for submission guidelines.

Citizen Minutes is the second major creative project Hot Docs has commissioned. To commemorate Canada's Sesquicentennial in 2017, the organization commissioned *In the Name of All Canadians*, a compilation of six short documentaries inspired by Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The film premiered at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema and went on to screen at cinemas and film festivals around the world; it is now part of the Hot Docs Collection and is available for on-demand viewing on select platforms.

The *Citizen Minutes* project is made possible through support by The Rossy Foundation.

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[Hot Docs](#) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing and celebrating the art of documentary and to creating production opportunities for documentary filmmakers. Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival, North America's largest documentary festival, conference and market, welcomes audiences of over 228,000 and more than 2,600 industry delegates. Year-round, Hot Docs supports the Canadian and international industry with professional development programs and a multi-million-dollar production fund portfolio, and fosters education through documentaries with its popular free program Docs For Schools. Hot Docs owns and programs the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, a century-old landmark located in Toronto's Annex neighbourhood and the world's first and largest documentary cinema.

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