ProdPro

2026

TV & Film Industry Outlook Report

A comprehensive view of how production volume, spend, and geography are evolving, with forward-looking signals drawn from ProdPro's proprietary data and industry surveys.

2025
A New Normal Takes Hold

2025 production levels were broadly in line with 2024, reinforcing a new normal in overall activity. Project starts increased 8 percent year over year, driven largely by the return of independent films, but total spending remained lower, reflecting the “more with less” approach many executives use to describe the current market. After a year defined by the refrain “survive until 2025,” expectations for a stronger rebound went unmet.

Growth in starts was concentrated almost entirely in films under $40 million, as financing that stalled in 2024 moved forward in 2025. As a result, higher start counts overstate the strength of the broader market. Scripted television spending remains 23 percent below its 2022 peak, as linear networks continue to retrench and major streamers direct additional content spend toward sports, live programming, podcasts, and licensed content. Theatrical production showed relative resilience in 2025, and global box office receipts were up year on year from 2024, though still shy of the pre-COVID baseline.

8% ▲
# of production starts in 2025 compared to prior year

-5% ▼
committed total production spend in 2025 compared to prior year

-23% ▼
committed Series spend in 2025 compared to 2022

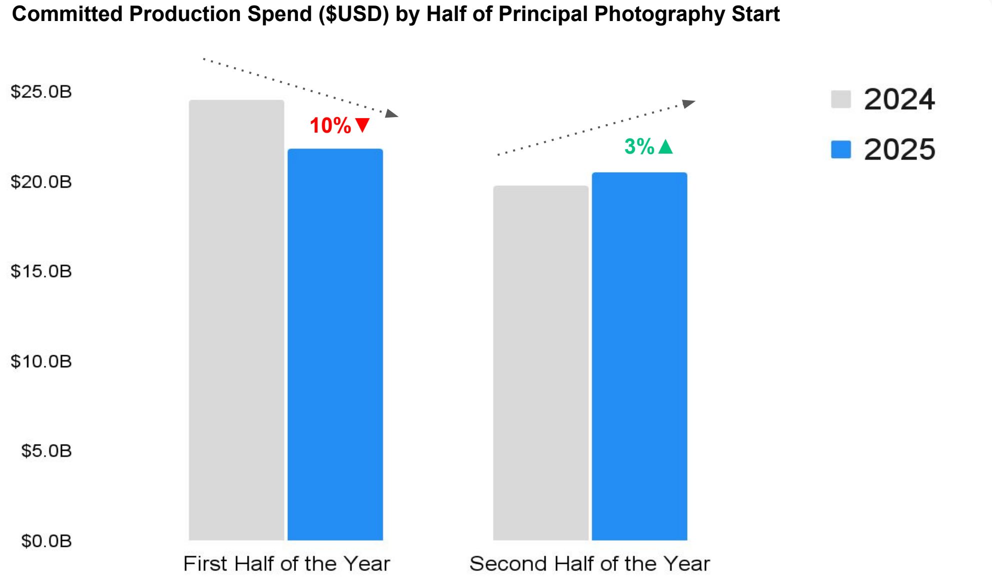
Encouragingly, the second half of 2025 was stronger than the first, with production activity improving quarter over quarter. This momentum may continue into 2026, as studio executives indicated in our survey that they expect modest increases to their slates.

Key risks to production planning this year include upcoming WGA and SAG negotiations, whose last cycle resulted in extended industry-wide work stoppages, as well as ongoing studio consolidation, including potential transactions involving Skydance, CBS, Netflix, and Warner Bros. Regardless of the outcomes, the uncertainty surrounding these events may drive delays and more cautious slate planning.

This 2026 Outlook Report provides a data-driven analysis of production volume, project mix, and filming locations, informed by ProdPro’s proprietary production tracking data and in-depth surveys of key industry stakeholders, including crew, vendors, and studio executives.

2025 Spend Levels Settle After Years of Volatility

With the post-strike surge behind us, second half of 2025 growth indicates the market has stabilized



Total spending, including both features and series, in the first half of 2025 was 10 percent lower than in the first half of 2024, declining from $24.6 billion to $22.3 billion. This decline reflects a comparison against the post-strike surge in production activity in early 2024, rather than a deterioration in underlying market conditions.

In the second half of 2025, spending increased 3 percent compared to the second half of 2024, rising from $19.9 billion to $20.6 billion. This growth points to a more stable market environment, with the lower spending levels established in late 2024 carrying forward into steadier, more sustainable activity.

ProdPro data tracking covers all scripted, live-action TV and feature film productions with estimated production budgets of $1M+, produced globally in English-language and/or non-English language productions commissioned by a major US-based distribution platform or channel (i.e., Netflix, HBO, Amazon, etc.). Committed production spend is calculated from the total estimated budgets of each film project and TV season and attributed to the period in which principal photography commenced. ProdPro estimates budgets based on its proprietary model trained on historical actuals, which takes into account production format, subgenre, cost of living, inflation and other attributes.

Features Surge as Indie Films Return

Feature production rebounded in 2025, but the recovery was uneven. Total starts rose 19 percent year over year, with 829 films entering production, yet the growth was concentrated almost entirely in lower-budget projects. Films under $40 million increased 24 percent, reflecting a broad reopening of the independent market after financing froze in 2024.

At the high end, studios remained selective. While the number of films above $40 million declined modestly, a small number of very large projects absorbed a disproportionate share of capital. Studios are still willing to place big bets, but only on a limited set of high-conviction titles, like *Avengers: Doomsday*, rather than rebuilding broad mid-budget slates.

That polarization shows up clearly in spend. The $1–$5 million tier saw both higher volume and higher total spend, rising from roughly $880 million in 2024 to $1.22 billion in 2025, driven by a 46 percent increase in project count. By contrast, the $40–$100 million range continued to contract, underscoring how risk has been pushed either down-market or to the very top.

In contrast, series starts declined 7 percent year over year, from 518 to 481 titles, settling into a lower baseline near 500 scripted series annually. This reflects a deliberate shift away from Peak TV-era scripted volume as studios and streamers prioritize other content types (Sports, Live, Podcasts), bundling, licensing, and post-merger integration.

of Productions

Year of Principal Photography Start

	2024	2025	% YoY
Series	518	481	7%▼
Feature	695	829	19%▲
Totals	**1,213**	**1,310**	8%▲

Excludes pilots, TV movies, and productions with estimated budgets <$1M.

Committed Production Spend ($USD)

Year of Principal Photography Start

	2024	2025	% YoY
Series	$30.1B	$27.7B	8%▼
Feature	$13.3B	$13.7B	3%▲
Totals	**$43.3B**	**$41.4B**	5%▼

Excludes pilots, TV movies, and productions with estimated budgets <$1M.

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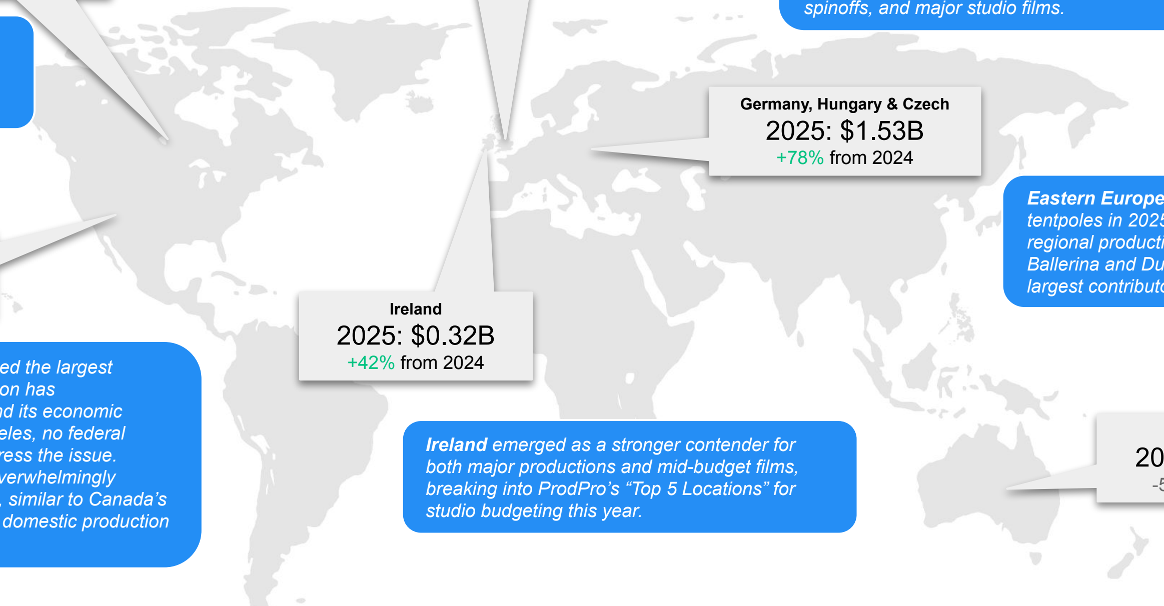
Leading Filming Hubs by High-Budget Production Spend

Based on projects with budgets of $40 million or more



Canada
2025: $4.61B
-13% from 2024

***Canada** experienced a significant contraction in production activity, driven largely by reduced U.S. linear television output and pullback from select streamers.*

United Kingdom
2025: $6.97B
+15% from 2024

***United Kingdom** continued to grow as a leading global production hub in 2025, supported by one of the most aggressive above-the-line incentive programs in the market. This has reinforced the U.K.'s position as a preferred location for the year's largest projects, including The Rings of Power, Harry Potter Series, Game of Thrones spinoffs, and major studio films.*

Germany, Hungary & Czech
2025: $1.53B
+78% from 2024

***Eastern Europe** attracted several major U.S. tentpoles in 2025, driving a significant increase in regional production spend. Projects such as Ballerina and Dune: Part Three were among the largest contributors.*

United States
2025: $12.15B
-20% from 2024

***United States** production hubs experienced the largest contraction. While the current administration has acknowledged the industry's slowdown and its economic impact on major centers such as Los Angeles, no federal policy framework has yet emerged to address the issue. Studio executives surveyed by ProdPro overwhelmingly indicated that a federal incentive program, similar to Canada's national model, would materially increase domestic production activity.*

Ireland
2025: $0.32B
+42% from 2024

***Ireland** emerged as a stronger contender for both major productions and mid-budget films, breaking into ProdPro's "Top 5 Locations" for studio budgeting this year.*

Australia
2025: $1.11B
-5% from 2024

This chart includes productions with estimated production budgets **greater than $40M** to show where the major projects have moved.
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ProdPro Survey Results

Perspectives of key stakeholders

In January 2026, ProdPro conducted a comprehensive survey with over 850 below-the-line crew members, industry suppliers, and studio executives to assess community sentiment about the past year and expectations for the future. The survey included a diverse group of crew members – 62% of whom are Heads of Departments (HODs) – from the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Europe, Australia and elsewhere. The suppliers represented include C-suite executives and sales managers from leading equipment manufacturers, rental facilities, agencies, and post houses. Our survey of Studio executives reached the leaders of physical and post-production roles from major studios, streaming services, independent studios, and international production companies.

Below-the-line Crew

+750

Production, Costumes, Makeup, Camera, Props, Art, VFX, Post, Sound, Music, Stunts, Accounting

Studio & Supplier Execs

+100

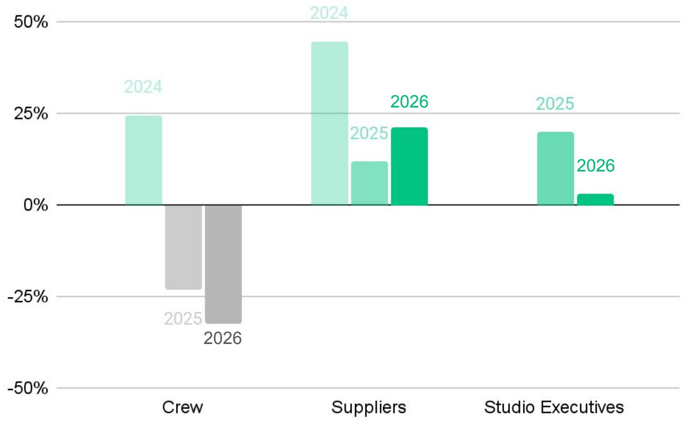
Physical Production, Post Production, Production Finance, CEO, Owners, COO, CFO, Sales, Marketing, Finance

2026 Outlook: Diverging perspectives

The outlook heading into 2026 remains uneven, with sentiment continuing to diverge across the industry. Crew outlook has deteriorated sharply, falling from a net positive 25 percent in 2024 to negative territory in both 2025 and 2026. This sentiment is broadly consistent across major production hubs, suggesting a shared concern about the direction of the industry and the long-term reliability of freelance work. Crew respondents reported an average of six months since their last TV or film job, reinforcing this pressure.

Supplier sentiment remains net positive but has moderated. For many suppliers that right-sized in 2024, 2025 was a period of adjustment rather than growth, often achieved through continued cost discipline. Studio executives remain the most positive group, though expectations softened in 2026, with staffing plans largely focused on maintaining current headcount rather than expansion. Taken together, the data points to an industry adjusting to a reset operating environment, with the greatest strain continuing to be felt at the labor level.

What is your general outlook for the TV & film industry in 2026?

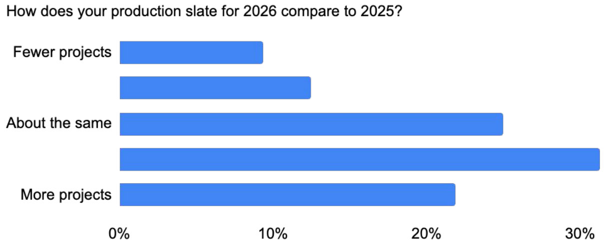


Expectations for 2026 production volume

Increased production slates

In surveys of executives at both studios and suppliers, the expectation is that 2026 production volume will increase relative to 2025. Despite labor negotiations scheduled for the first half of 2026, studio executives are optimistic in terms of production volume, albeit with slightly lower expected average production budgets. Industry consolidation across streamers and broadcasters remain among the most significant risks executives foresee in production planning.

How does your production slate for 2026 compare to 2025?

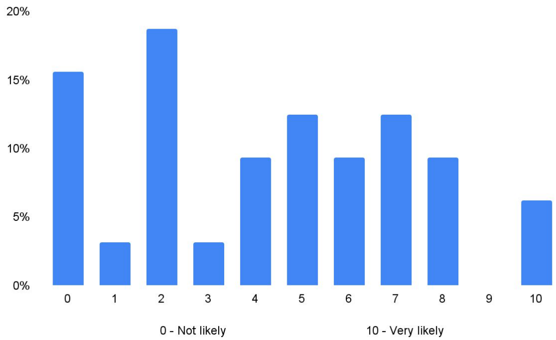


53% Share of studio respondents who expect an increased slate in this year's survey– up from 46% last year.

Key Risks

Concerns about labor stability remain elevated heading into 2026. Studio executives rated the likelihood of a major Hollywood work stoppage at an average of 4.3 out of ten, indicating a meaningful but not imminent risk, with responses reflecting uncertainty rather than consensus. Vendors viewed the risk as slightly lower, suggesting labor disruption remains a consideration but not a central expectation for the year.

Risk of Work Stoppage
In 2026, how likely is a major Hollywood work stoppage?



What is Driving Location Decisions in 2026?

With continued downward pressure on budgets, 65 percent of executives cited tax incentives as a top-three lever for cost containment in 2026. When asked how much of their slate is produced in the lowest-cost viable location, responses averaged ~70 percent. For the smaller set of projects that did not shoot in the lowest-cost location, the primary driver was creative or aesthetic needs, followed by talent-related requirements.

Against this backdrop, executives surveyed reported notable shifts in their preferred production hubs for 2026–27. New York moved into the top position, supported by recent changes to its incentive framework, while California and Georgia also rose into the top five. Ireland emerged as a major hub for forward planning, bolstered by its expanded incentives for visual effects.

When asked about new locations under consideration, several emerging hubs stood out, most notably Spain and Eastern Europe, alongside growing interest in incentive-backed markets such as Saudi Arabia, underscoring how aggressively studios are reassessing geography in pursuit of cost efficiency.

When asked which locations have presented challenges in securing stage space, London and Budapest were cited most frequently, though the majority of respondents reported little difficulty finding available stage space over the past year.

Top budgeted locations among studio executives 2026-2027

1. New York
2. United Kingdom
3. California
4. Georgia
5. Ireland
6. Toronto
7. Vancouver
8. Czech Republic
9. Australia
10. New Jersey

AI & Production in 2026

Artificial intelligence remains a hot-button topic across TV and film, from development through delivery. While attention around AI continues to grow, our survey results suggest that actual adoption and usage expectations are largely unchanged from a year ago.

Studio executives reported plans to apply AI tools across an average of 32 percent of projects on their 2026 slates, up modestly from 29 percent last year. Responses varied widely, ranging from no planned use to near-universal adoption, underscoring that AI strategy remains highly uneven across studios and producers.

Visual effects was cited most frequently as the area where AI will have the greatest near-term impact. Executives also pointed to meaningful gains in pre-production, including script breakdowns, schedule optimization, and budget sensitivity modeling, while on-set automation remains a lower priority in the near term.

Top 5 uses of AI, provided by studios:

1. **Post-production workflows** (ChatGPT, Claude, temp ADR tools, sound cleanup, editing assist)
2. **VFX and visual development** (Runway, OpenArt, Sora, VFX pipelines, animation tools)
3. **Pre-production planning** (script breakdowns, schedule optimization, budget modeling, Quickture Reader)
4. **Concept, previs, storyboarding (**ChatGPT, Gemini, previs tools, pitch decks, vis/dev apps)
5. **Administrative productivity** (ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot for organization, logistics, project scope)

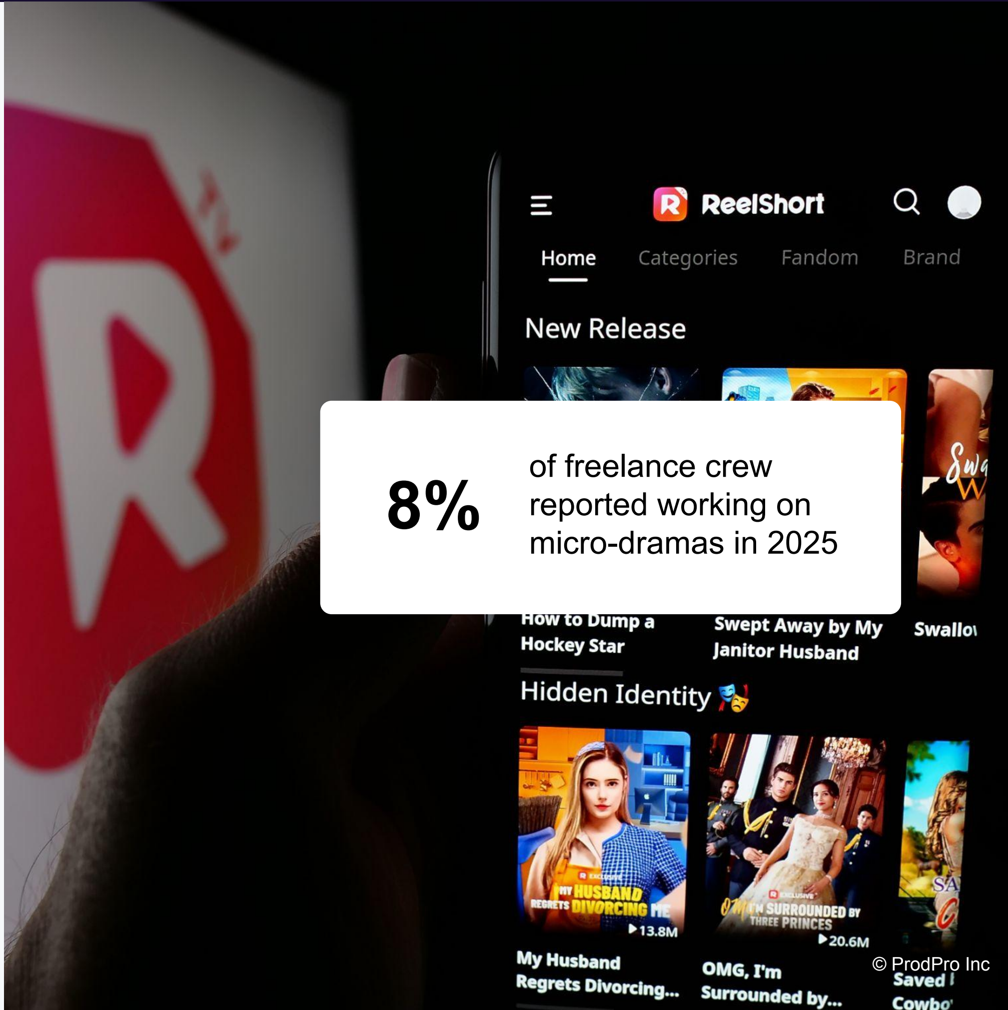
What is going on with micro-dramas?

We asked vendors and crew to weigh in.

Vertical or “micro-drama” content refers to short-form, mobile-first scripted series, typically shot in vertical format and designed for social platforms. These projects may reflect early signs that mobile-first audiences are gravitating back toward scripted drama, even as the format, budgets, and economics differ significantly from traditional television or film.

Despite growing attention, participation for industry professionals remains limited. In our 2026 Industry Outlook survey, 79 percent of suppliers and 92 percent of freelance crew reported not working on any vertical or micro-drama projects in 2025. Among those who did, 63 percent said it represented less than 10 percent of their total workload, reinforcing that this remains supplemental rather than core work.

Supplier interest reflects similar caution. Budget constraints and limited ability to support services at scale were the most common concerns, and only 12 percent of suppliers indicated plans to increase investment or focus in this area in 2026.



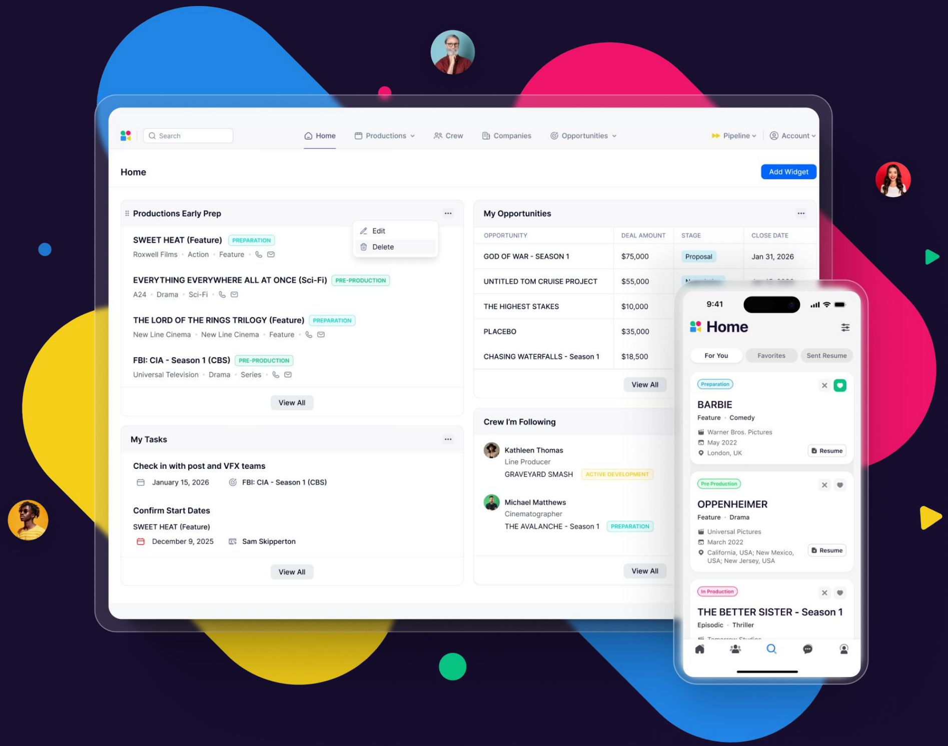
8% of freelance crew reported working on micro-dramas in 2025

ProdPro

ProdPro provides the data and insight behind the trends shaping film and television production. Our platform combines proprietary production tracking, industry surveys, and deep supply chain intelligence to help studios, suppliers, and crews understand where projects are moving, how budgets are shifting, and what's coming next.

Ready to learn more?

Request demo



Research cited by top media and trade publications

WSJ | The New York Times | The Hollywood Reporter | CNN | BBC | Los Angeles Times | Bloomberg