

Mellon Foundation National Playwright Residency Program: 2020 Round

- Application Due Date: Thursday, September 12, 2019 at 5:00pm ET
- Three-year residences to commence in July 2020

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, in collaboration with [HowlRound Theatre Commons](#) at Emerson College, established the [National Playwright Residency Program](#) (NPRP) in 2013. The program provides three years of salary, benefits, and a flexible research and development fund for a diverse group of American playwrights at selected theaters around the country. More than a standard residency, we conceived this initiative as an intervention into the traditional relationships between artists and institutions, as a way of reimagining what institutions might look like when an artist's voice is at their cores. NPRP has four primary goals:

- Advance the state of playwrights in the American theater by providing them with space, time, and resources, and greater access to the institutions in which they work;
- Influence the working environment of theaters by embedding playwrights in them;
- Generate public value through the interaction of playwrights with local artistic and civic communities;
- Document and disseminate the findings to help benefit the field.

Residencies will be selected through an open application process. Theaters and playwrights must apply jointly by submitting statements of intent from the playwright and artistic director; a scope of work; and other specified materials to demonstrate eligibility, potential to achieve the goals of the program, and desire to participate in a growing network to advance artist-centered practices in the theater field.

The basic structure of the program will remain similar to prior rounds. Playwright compensation and benefits will be covered by grant funds based on the salary structure of the host institution, up to a maximum salary and benefits of \$130,000 in the first year of the grant. Resident playwrights will also receive access to discretionary development funds and opportunities for developmental workshops hosted by HowlRound at Emerson College, and theaters will receive modest funds to support administrative expenses associated with hosting and documenting the residency. In the two prior rounds of the program, we have been able to offer a single three-year renewal when mutually agreeable among the playwright, theater, and Foundation; we hope to do the same this round.

The application must be received no later than Thursday, September 12, 2019 at 5:00pm ET. A peer review panel will recommend a group of potential theater and playwright partners for consideration in early November, and the Foundation will then issue invitations for the recommended group to submit supplemental materials that will complete the application. If approved by the Foundation's trustees in March 2020, residencies would commence as of July 1, 2020.

As you consider whether you wish to apply, we have listed the eligibility requirements below.

Requirements for Theaters

- US-based (including territories) 501(c)(3) with a minimum of five years in operation;
- Full-time staff of at least two paid employees;
- Minimum annual operating budget of \$500,000 (average of the past three years). There will be no upper limit to the operating budget, but the largest theaters will be expected to cover the salary and benefits over and above the maximum grant size (see below);
- Must produce a minimum of two plays per season;
- Theater or Artistic Director (if new to organization) must have previously produced at least one play by the partner playwright;
- Commitment to produce at least one play by the playwright during the grant period;
- Commitment to establish a salary for the playwright based on the salary level of senior management of small-to-midsized theaters or upper-middle management of larger theaters (up to a maximum of \$130,000 year; salary levels above that cap would have to be paid by the theaters). The salary would be exclusive of extra responsibilities such as directing, for which the playwright would be eligible for additional compensation;
- Has not previously participated in NPRP.

Requirements for Playwrights

- Must reside in close proximity to the theater and intend to remain there for the full three years;
- At least three plays previously given professional productions—with one at the co-applicant theater;
- No other full time employment, including academic positions. Adjunct academic positions must be in a reasonable commuting distance from the host theater. It is our expectation that during the residency period playwrights may receive television writing opportunities as well as commissions, and directing or acting opportunities, from other theaters; these will be permissible so long as they don't detract from residency responsibilities;
- Has not previously participated in NPRP.

Requirements for Both

- Playwrights and theaters must apply together by submitting individual statements and a jointly crafted scope of work;
- Only one application per theater and playwright may be submitted;
- Both the playwright and the artistic leader of the theater must agree to attend two NPRP convenings during the residency at Emerson College (travel expenses would be paid by the Foundation);
- Commitment to establishing and carrying through a plan for documentation of the residency in collaboration with HowlRound.

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

You will submit your application through the Foundation's Fluxx portal. After completing a brief survey to confirm eligibility for the program, eligible applicants will be directed to an online form to submit the application.

Material entered into the portal cannot be saved and returned to at a later time. We suggest that applicants prepare their application material in a separate document, then copy and paste into the online form.

The Artistic Director of the organization will receive a confirmation email upon receipt of your application.

Applicants will be required to provide the following information:

- **Theater Information**
 - Legal name of theater
 - Theater dba (if applicable)
 - Address
 - Organization phone
 - Year of founding
 - Number of paid, full-time employees
 - Total operating expenses, last fiscal year
 - Average annual operating expenses, last three fiscal years
 - EIN
- **Contact Information**
 - Artistic Director: first name, last name, job title, work phone, work email
 - Playwright: full name, email, phone, city and state of residence
 - Grants Management Contact: full name, email, phone
- **Statements of Intent and Scope of Work ([see descriptions below](#))**
 - Artistic Director Statement of Intent (1,500 words or less)
 - Playwright Statement of Intent (1,500 words or less)
 - Scope of Work (500 words or less)
- **Salary**
 - Years 1-3: base salary, taxes, benefits and fringe
 - Budget notes
- **Production Information**
 - Playwright's Work
 - Playwright's Work at Theater
 - Organizational Overview (500 words or less)
 - Artistic Director Biography (200 words or less)
 - Playwright Biography (200 words or less)

Statements of Intent

Two separate statements, one by the artistic director and one by the playwright (each 1,500 words or less)

Both statements should address the following:

- Relationship of the theater and the writer to the community, and the impact a residency could have on that community;
- Potential impact of the residency on the theater and its staff;
- Potential impact of the residency on the playwright;
- Potential for playwright and artistic director to influence one another;
- What resources you would each bring to the residency beyond the grant funds;
- Expectations around exclusivity for works written during the residency;
- How the theater would advocate for its playwright and vice versa;
- How the proposed salary fits into the broader salary structure of the institution;
- Your capacity to undertake the work at this time;
- Why you wish to participate in a multi-year residency program;
- Confirmation of willingness to work with HowlRound and the Foundation to develop a plan for documenting the activities of the residency for both evaluation and public dissemination.

Scope of Work

One submission, jointly written by playwright and artistic director (500 words or less)

This residency opportunity is firstly intended to support the playwright's writing time and productions. In addition, playwrights and artistic directors should develop mutually agreed upon roles and responsibilities to expand and support the work of the theater, the community and/or the theater field. This brief scope of work should describe these agreements. The scope of work should also include a description of known or anticipated external commitments (such as other commissions and productions, directing engagements, teaching responsibilities, etc.) for both the playwright and the artistic director during the grant period and a description of how communication would be maintained and time away would be handled.

Organizational Overview

Organizational overview highlighting the mission, history, and major accomplishments of the theater. (500 words or less)

[SUBMIT AN APPLICATION >>](#)

For application inquiries, please email nprp@mellon.org.