



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Southwest MN Housing Partnership Resident Artist- Storytelling/Communications Artist

Full Proposals due by: January 31, 2020

Info session (webinar) date: January 9, 2020

***Session will be recorded and made available afterward**

For questions and/or to sign-up for the webinar:

For general questions, please email swmhp@swmhp.org

For questions related to what this residency entails, please contact:

SUMMARY

Organizational Background: The Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership (SWMHP) is a non-profit community development corporation serving thirty counties in Southwest and South Central Minnesota. The Mission of SWMHP is to "Create thriving places to live, grow and work through partnerships with communities." *For more information about SWMHP, visit: www.swmhp.org.*

Residency Description: This RFP is soliciting speculative proposals for a Resident Artist to apply their creative practices to the work of the SWMHP. We are interested in artists with expertise in storytelling, journalism, or communications and will work with staff to tell the stories of our individual positions, organization, and the communities we serve. Ideal artists will have a community-driven or social practice, an interest in systems / organizational work, and an understanding of and / or connection to rural communities and/ or the region SWMHP serves. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Provide input, insight and creative thinking for organizational processes, systems, issues, activities and meetings of the Partnership;
- Professional development training for staff members in the areas of storytelling and communications, specifically helping staff across all areas of the organization identify the stories they can share;
- Design, develop, and implement marketing or storytelling campaign and/or strategies that enhances overall program and organizational effectiveness and broadens the scope and reach of the stories the Partnership shares;
- Advance and integrate creative practice and deepen community engagement strategies for SWMHP staff;
- Act as an advisor / liaison / connector with other community artists engaged by SWMHP;
- Attend workshops, events, and convenings scheduled as a part of the initiative;
- Participate fully in activities designed to document and assess the arts and culture strategies' impact and effectiveness.

Terms: Approximately 20-25 hours/week for a total of 80-100 hours per month. Ideal residency proposals would be for a period of time between six (6) – twelve (12) months in length (although we are open to other residency lengths). This residency period includes an initial (up to) 4 weeks of intentional research time, during which you will get to know our staff and work, with the remainder of the residency intended to be dedicated to development of communication strategies that help Staff engage more intentionally in and share with others, the work we do with each other and the communities we serve. The resident artist will both design and facilitate the creation of an initial marketing campaign, or bring in outside consultants to support this work, and will work to develop staff's capacity and skills to continue this work on.

Ideally, the Resident Artist would be available to start by the end of May 2020. The Resident Artist will be expected to attend the monthly full-staff meeting on the first Tuesday of each month at the Slayton, MN office.

Compensation: Exact amount will be determined in contract negotiations with selected artist based on their proposal. Proposal should include artist hourly rate. Limited travel and lodging funds are available, which will be determined in the contracting process. Additional Project Budget of up to \$20,000 will be provided to support project development and implementation, for expenses such as artist/collaborator(s) compensation and materials. This is a contract position without employment benefits.

Proposal Submittal: Speculative proposals are due by **January 31, 2020**. Please send all required components of your proposal in a single pdf document to swmhp@swmhp.org.

FULL PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Residency Background: We believe that art and creative processes can add value to our work; helping to advance collaboration amongst and across departments, SWMHP sites, and communities. The goal of the Residency is to embed a paid Resident Artist within the SWMHP organization. Primary functions include spending research time getting to know the work and people of SWMHP; and working collaboratively with staff to design and deliver creative projects, tools, and/or strategies that advance new ways of thinking, exploring and implementing ideas within the organization and the communities we serve, as well as sharing the stories of the the work we do and communities we serve. Ultimately, SWMHP desires to achieve new ways of looking at and engaging with our coworkers, community partners and residents to advance our Mission; with staff/departments more easily able to identify opportunities to intersect and work more closely together.

Request for Proposal: This RFP is soliciting speculative proposals for a Resident Artist to apply their creative practices to the work of the SWMHP. The artist will work with staff to develop projects and/or strategies across departments that integrate creative marketing and storytelling into organizational practices. The length of the residency is flexible, with strongest proposals between six (6) and twelve (12) months, dependent upon the time frame and process the artist feels is appropriate to accomplish the proposed work. Projects that emerge may include but are not limited to:

1. Creative meeting, training or workshop facilitation within the organization and its breadth of work;
2. On site engagement with staff and potential partners in the SWMHP offices in Slayton, MN and Mankato, MN;
3. Community engagement on existing SWMHP projects and in communities we serve.

Please Note: We are open to alternative arrangements, formats, timelines and structures for this Residency. If you have questions regarding any of the information in this RFP or if you would like to talk through an alternative proposal / residency format, please contact us.

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Proposals should include:

- 1. Speculative Residency Vision description (600 words max), which addresses the following:
 - Please describe what your approach might be using your creative practices in an organizational setting.
 - Why are you interested in this residency?
 - What creative processes will you engage in collaborating with our organization? (Please note: we are not looking for you to propose **projects** or outcomes, just the kinds of **processes** that you might use when engaging with our staff, community partners, residents, etc. We understand and expect that your **projects** will develop after getting to know the staff and the organization's work. We are specifically interested in proposals that explore systems thinking and development.)
 - What is your ideal timeline for the residency? (Ideal minimum length: six-months, Maximum length: twelve-months; we are willing to consider other timelines)

- Please include a brief outline of how you might spend your residency timeline. Please anticipate/include an initial (up to) 4 weeks of intentional research time, during which you will get to know our staff and work. The residency needs to be completed by **May 31, 2021**.
 - What is your experience in engaging a diverse representation of communities in your artistic practice or processes?
 - It is not a requirement that the artist lives in the SWMN Region, though we have found it to be much more effective if an artist is onsite / nearby for the majority of their residency. Please include a brief description of how you would see this Residency fitting into your life and geographic location.
- 2. Example(s) of previous transformative and/or storytelling work you have done in an organizational space or community based art practices you have completed (500 word limit). Up to three examples may be included with your proposal. Feel free to include images, links to videos or audio files, writing samples, or any additional work sample format that best showcases your work.
 - 3. List of additional artists/collaborators you may want to involve in the execution of the residency, if any.

Residency Selection Criteria:

1. Connections to the Community

- Demonstrated experience or knowledge of and connection to community assets and creative systems that can advance the work of an organization.
- Knowledge of rural, diverse communities; specific knowledge of the Southwest and South Central Minnesota region is preferred. Ability to articulate the ways in which past and future artistic practices connect to the region, community development and professional sector is preferred.
- Cultural competency and demonstrated ability to constructively work with traditionally underrepresented and/or new American communities in the region.

2. Established Artistic or Creative Practice

- Demonstrated experience as a practicing, working artist. Demonstrated experience exploring art practices as part of engagement with a rural and diverse representation of community is preferred.
- Demonstrated experience with a practice that parallels the social/professional direction of the SWMHP is desired. The SWMHP is focused on addressing the social, economic and cultural opportunities surrounding affordable housing and empowerment opportunities for a diverse representation of communities in Southwest and South Central Minnesota.
- Demonstrated experience in marketing, communications, or storytelling

3. Experience working in community organizing, community building or community development.

- Strong interest in the intersection of art and organizational processes, and/or community engagement and community development activities.
- Ability to work independently as well as collaboratively in a team-based environment.
- Knowledge of societal and systemic issues related to rural affordable housing and housing challenges affecting youth and adults in a community, is desired but not required.

4. Personal Capacity

- Strong ability to communicate, and pursue equity-focused creative practice.
- Willingness and ability to learn and grow while meeting the changing requirements of the work.
- Ability to explore complex community focused concepts through creative processes.
- Ability to work independently and take leadership on projects, while also thriving in a collaborative environment.
- Regular availability during the Residency timeline.

Residency Timeline:

January 9, 2020 at 6:00PM: Info session webinar (please email swmhp@swmhp.org if interested in attending)

January 31, 2020:	Proposals due by NOON CST.
Week of February 17, 2020:	Artist Interviews*
Week of February 24, 2020:	Artist Selected
April 2020- May 2021:	Residency Dates (variable within the parameters, depending on scope of selected proposals)
May 31, 2021:	Latest date for Residency Completion

* A stipend of \$250 will be made available to those artists who are invited to interview for this residency.

Working Environment: SWMHP is open to an arrangement of office time / on-site engagements and tele-commuting / off-site work depending on the scope of proposal submitted, however during the staff engagement phase of the residency it would be expected that the Resident Artist spend more time in the Slayton, MN office than off-site due to the importance of relationship building in this effort. Additional travel may include the Mankato, MN office, and partner communities throughout the region, as needed. The effort may include some evening and weekend commitments.