BLUE SKY CENTER

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

June 2019 Desert Fellowship

The Desert Fellowship

Over the course of three weeks, Blue Sky Center's June 2019 Desert Fellow will develop an independent creative project that thoughtfully engages local residents. This work will be site-responsive, with an on-site proposal process guided by our staff and informed by the Fellow's experiences listening and learning from Cuyama Valley communities.

Concurrently, the Fellow will work alongside Blue Sky Center staff to develop a second, organization-specific project(s) that will in some way further the Blue Sky mission and build organizational capacity. These projects will be decided in conversation with Blue Sky staff prior to the Fellow's arrival and will take up ~7 hours/week (one BSC work day).

About You

Ideal Desert Fellow candidates are self-directed, community-centered artists with interest or experience working in rural places. You work across or between mediums, using creative practice to reflect, respond, imagine, critique, subvert—or something else entirely. You engage with history, grapple with the present, or address the future. You enter new communities with sensitivity and create work that builds upon values of equity, inclusion, and co-creation.

If you're still wondering if this Fellowship is the right fit for you, check out *Questions for Visiting (Artists)*, a project on the critical implications of visiting by 2018 artists-in-residence Mary Welcome and Nicole Lavelle.

Fellowship Objectives

1. To invite exchange and collaboration between the Desert Fellow, Cuyama Valley residents, and Blue Sky Center.
2. To further arts enrichment and access within the Cuyama Valley.
3. To highlight rural places as culturally vibrant places for artists to live and work.
4. To expand the field of socially engaged arts to emphasize rural places.
5. To creatively build the capacity of Blue Sky Center as an organization and community resource.

Fellowship Award, Travel, and Accomodations

Our June 2019 Desert Fellow will receive a $1,500 stipend. Fellows are paid as independent contractors; the stipend is taxable and reportable income. We also provide up to $400 in non-taxable travel support. Depending on project proposals, we may provide partial-to-full cost of supplies.

Lodging will be provided in-kind by BSC via a dorm room in our main building. Amenities include a sleeping room, workspace, shower/bathroom, kitchen, and shop access. Fellows will be included in twice-weekly (six total) family-style meals with the BSC team, coordinating at least two of these meals. BSC values this in-kind benefit at $60.

How to Apply

1. Please complete our Google Form application, which includes the short-answer prompts below. Please keep each response to 1,000 characters (about 200 words) or less.

    a. *Please introduce yourself.* (Who are you? What should we know about you? What experiences do you bring that might inform your residency?)

    b. *Describe your creative practice.* (What kind of work do you make? Why do you make it? How has your practice evolved and in what direction do you hope to take your work in the future?)

    c. *Provide a statement of intent.* (Why do you want to do this residency? Why now? Why Blue Sky Center and/or the Cuyama Valley?)

    d. *Explain your approach to community co-creation.* (Provide examples of your social practice and strategies of creative community engagement.)

    e. *Describe your lived rural experience/appreciation and how it will inform your time in the Cuyama Valley.* (Why do you want to spend three weeks in a rural place? Why might this rural experience be compelling/challenging/exciting in relation to your life/practice?)

2. Email examples of past work.

    a. Email a PDF not exceeding (8) letter-sized (8-1⁄2" x 11") pages to RFP@blueskycenter.org with the subject line "[Last, First name] Desert Fellow Work Samples." Please also use this as the title for your PDF file.

    b. This document should highlight 4-6 projects in whatever form your work is best represented (writing samples, images, video/stills, performance ephemera, descriptions, etc.). If your work lives online, you may include links. If directing us to a personal website please provide links to specific pages. If submitting links to video, please limit to five (5) minutes in total length.

Selection Metrics

All applications will be reviewed by a selection panel that will include the BSC Creative Community Engagement project team and may also include community members, past visiting artists, BSC Board Members, and alumni staff.

Our panel will review applications according to the following metrics:

- Clear understanding of why this Fellowship is a good fit.
- Clear and thoughtful communication of creative process and work.
- Quality of work samples.
- Demonstration of intentional and inclusive processes.
- Capacity to design, propose, and produce site-responsive work within three-week fellowship.
- Lived rural experience and/or appreciation is a plus.
- Spanish verbal fluency is a plus.

Timeline

Application opens: Friday, March 29, 2019 **Application closes:** 11:59 PM PST, Sunday, April 28, 2019
Interviews: May 2 - 8 **Notification:** Friday, May 10, 2019
Fellowship: Three (3) total weeks, tentatively Sunday, June 9 to Sunday, June 30, 2019 (finalized in Fellow contract).

About Us

Blue Sky Center (BSC) is a rural nonprofit located in New Cuyama, California. With a vision to build models for resilient, thriving rural economies, we work to strengthen our communities within the surrounding Cuyama Valley by supporting entrepreneurs and building our regional creative and economic resources. The Cuyama Valley, a 300-square-mile high-desert region, is home to 2,000 residents and lies just north of the Los Padres National Forest and south of the Carrizo Plain National Monument.

Founded as an ARCO company town in 1952, today the townsite of New Cuyama now serves 216 homes and contains the Cuyama Valley High School & Elementary School, the Cuyama Valley Recreation District office, a family resource center, a post office, a small local library, and a number of commercial businesses. Blue Sky Center operates out of renovated industrial and office buildings from the ARCO era. The larger Cuyama Valley is home to a number of agricultural operations, which is the primary industry, along with oil production and ranching.

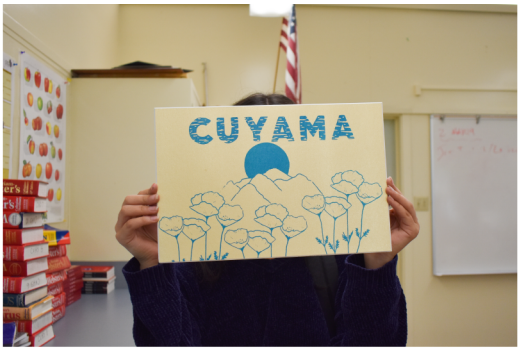
More information on Blue Sky Center can be found on our website, our 2018 Annual Report, Instagram, and Facebook.

Conflicts of Interest

Any person/business responding to or evaluating this call that has a real, possible, or perceived conflict of interest must disclose the conflict(s) within the application/evaluation process. Any person/business that assisted in the development of this call is excluded from responding.

Equal Opportunity

Blue Sky Center is committed to provide equal opportunity without regard to race, color, sex, age, disability, religion, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, ancestry, citizenship status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other basis protected by federal, state, or local law.

Questions?

We're happy to answer them! Please direct any questions to RFP@blueskycenter.org.