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Washington State Department Of Transportation Artist-in-Residence [WSDOT AIR]

CALL FOR ARTISTS

Date issued: November 20, 2018

Application deadline: January 7, 2019

Application form: <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/program/arts-culture/wsdot-air>

Project Overview

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), in partnership with Transportation for America (T4America) and the State Smart Transportation Initiative (SSTI), seek an artist or a team of artists to serve as the inaugural WSDOT Artist-in-Residence (AIR). The WSDOT AIR will be tasked with advancing WSDOT's transportation system policy goals: economic vitality, preservation, safety, mobility, environment, and stewardship. The WSDOT AIR will span one year, and the AIR is required to reside in Washington State for the duration of the year. The AIR will be based in WSDOT's headquarters in Olympia, WA, but depending on the AIR's project(s), the AIR may work from one of WSDOT's regional offices in Spokane, Wenatchee, Shoreline, Tumwater, Union Gap, or Vancouver for part of the residency.

The AIR will gain a thorough understanding of the inner workings of a state department of transportation, while supporting WSDOT's functions of providing sustainable, safe, reliable and cost-effective transportation options that improve communities and economic vitality for people and businesses. The project(s) executed by the AIR during the residency will be developed in close partnership with T4America, SSTI, and WSDOT. Possible projects may involve supplementing infrastructure design; fostering deeper community engagement with historically underserved communities; aiding WSDOT's efforts to communicate construction, scheduling, and other updates; and/or improving processes in routine work.

The WSDOT AIR follows a number of successful residencies in city agencies, but it is the nation's first artist residency in a state agency. The WSDOT AIR is generously funded by ArtPlace America.

WSDOT AIR Project Partners

WSDOT: The Washington State Department of Transportation is the steward of a multimodal transportation system and responsible for ensuring that people and goods move safely and efficiently. In addition to building, maintaining, and operating the state highway system, WSDOT is responsible for the

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state ferry system and a shortline freight rail system, and works in partnership with others to maintain and improve local roads, railroads and airports, as well as to support alternatives to driving, such as public transportation, bicycles and pedestrian programs.

Transportation for America: T4America, a program of Smart Growth America, is an alliance of elected, business and civic leaders from communities across the country, united to ensure that states and the federal government step up to invest in smart, homegrown, locally-driven transportation solutions. These are the investments that hold the key to our future economic prosperity.

The State Smart Transportation Initiative: SSTI promotes transportation practices that advance environmental sustainability and equitable economic development, while maintaining high standards of governmental efficiency and transparency. SSTI, jointly operated by the University of Wisconsin and Smart Growth America, operates in three ways:

- As a community of practice, where participating agencies can learn together and share experiences as they implement innovative smart transportation policies.
- As a source of direct technical assistance to the agencies on transformative and replicable smart transportation reform efforts.
- As a resource to the wider transportation community, including local, state, and federal agencies, in their efforts to reorient practice to changing social and financial demands.

ArtPlace America: ArtPlace is a ten-year collaboration among a number of foundations, federal agencies, and financial institutions that works to position arts and culture as a core sector of comprehensive community planning and development in order to help strengthen the social, physical, and economic fabric of communities. ArtPlace focuses its work on creative placemaking, which describes projects in which art plays an intentional and integrated role in place-based community planning and development. This brings artists, arts organizations, and artistic activity into the suite of placemaking strategies pioneered by Jane Jacobs and her colleagues, who believed that community development must be locally informed, human-centric, and holistic.

Program Background

The concept for the WSDOT AIR grew out of the recently published *Arts, Culture and Transportation: A Creative Placemaking Field Scan* [<http://t4america.org/maps-tools/creative-placemaking-field-scan>], produced by T4America with ArtPlace America. Released in 2017, the Field Scan explored how artists are contributing to transportation solutions, and identified state DOTs as a promising but as of yet untested venue for artistic intervention.

T4America believes that embedding artists within state DOTs will help to drive new and creative approaches that help achieve state DOTs' ambitious goals. Dwindling funding hinders the accomplishment of these goals, forcing DOTs to find creative approaches to improve safety, reduce congestion, enhance economic opportunity, improve reliability, preserve their system assets, accelerate project delivery, and ultimately create healthier neighborhoods for communities to grow and thrive.

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Simultaneously, T4America believes that embedded artists will benefit from learning how to better engage with the complex processes and projects overseen by state DOTs and therefore producing better and more meaningful work.

WSDOT's strategic goals include developing coordinated strategies for addressing preservation, safety, mobility, economic vitality, and environmental performance goals. WSDOT is a national leader in leading the development and delivery of transportation projects that are performance-based, data-driven, and guided by early community involvement.

AIR Purpose

Recognized as a tool in pioneering innovative and creative solutions, AIRs have been piloted across the nation in governmental agencies, including Los Angeles and Seattle DOTs. AIRs have proven effective in rethinking design challenges, increasing community buy-in, fostering deeper community engagement, augmenting planning goals, building relationships with traditionally underserved constituents, and improving outdated processes in routine work.

Structure of Residency

The AIR will be embedded in WSDOT for a period of 12 months and will begin with rotations through several of WSDOT's divisions. These rotations will focus on providing the AIR knowledge on the operations of WSDOT, staff and administration priorities, strategic and daily challenges, and division culture. The rotations will serve to help the AIR determine WSDOT staff's motivations and objectives so that the AIR may propose projects that directly address these motivations and objectives while also supporting T4A's objectives of improving community engagement, supporting alternatives to single occupancy vehicle transport, and driving transportation solutions that improve safety and equity. Rotations shall conclude after four months; the remaining eight months will be devoted to the AIR's project(s) development and production. Working in close collaboration with T4America and WSDOT staff, the AIR may decide to focus on one WSDOT division or process, or on several divisions or processes.

The AIR will be a half-time contractor for Smart Growth America, and will report to SGA/T4America's Director of Arts and Culture, as well as a steering committee consisting of staff from WSDOT, T4America, SSTI, and ArtPlace.

The AIR will update T4America and SSTI staff monthly through video conferences. These updates, as well as quarterly updates from WSDOT leadership, will serve as the basis for a final report and a set of best practices to share with other state DOTs.

After the completion of the residency, the WSDOT secretary and AIR will present a summary of the residency experience to the secretaries of the DOTs that participate in the SSTI community of practice to

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encourage adoption of this approach by additional state DOTs. The AIR and steering committee will share information on the residency through webinars and conference presentations in the months after its completion.

Residency Tasks

The AIR is expected to:

- Participate in monthly check-in calls with T4America and WSDOT staff.
- Participate in quarterly in-person debrief meetings with T4America, SSTI, and WSDOT staff.
- Maintain a working presence in WSDOT by attending and participating in WSDOT and community meetings, and meeting regularly with relevant WSDOT staff.
- Track work hours and project expenses, and invoice T4America for payment in accordance with T4America's procedures.
- Once a project(s) has been decided upon, develop a work plan and provide clear and consistent communication with project managers and staff, adhering to WSDOT's protocols.
- Become familiar with relevant agency processes to ensure that proposed projects directly connect to the actual work of WSDOT.
- Document the AIR process through visual, written, video, or other forms of documentation with the goal of providing instructions to future AIRs.
- Participate in project evaluation and the dissemination of lessons learned during the residency.
- Be prepared to present lessons learned and work produced through the residency at conferences and convenings as requested by T4America.

Selection Criteria

The selected AIR will be someone who can use artistic interventions to help WSDOT achieve their articulated goals. The residency requires a willingness to be open to the inner workings of a state DOT, technical language, and DOT culture. Artists must be committed to collaboration, equitable approaches, and community engagement. The AIR must have a portfolio that demonstrates their ability to align creative practice with social and public need. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated on the following criteria:

- Artistic merit and professional qualifications demonstrated in a CV and dynamic portfolio of past work
- Experience working collaboratively with people representing a range of demographics and disciplines
- Ability to communicate effectively and synthesize complex concepts
- Exceptional cultural competency and demonstrated ability to constructively work with traditionally underserved communities
- Possession of a broad range of creative skills that are applicable to the development and execution of the residency, such as social practice, graphic design, fabrication, photography, writing, etc.

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- Prior experience working in governmental agencies is not required but preferred.
- Basic knowledge of the diverse services provided by WSDOT and a sincere eagerness to learn more about the goals of WSDOT

Eligibility

This residency is open to artists 18 years of age or older who are eligible to work in the U.S. for the length of the residency. The residency will not sponsor green cards, visas, or citizenship. Paperwork should be sorted out prior to residency start date, which is not flexible. The AIR must be able to work in Olympia, WA for the duration of the residency. Artists working in any media are encouraged to apply, however, artists must have extensive experience with community engagement and collaboration as part of their practice. Artists at any career level may apply. The residency will include an ongoing public component including blogging and social media posts. T4America, WSDOT, SSTI, and ArtPlace retain the right to use documentation of AIR's work, or the original work itself, in promotional materials. The AIR retains copyright to produced work.

Budget

The AIR will be provided a stipend of \$40,000 for the year-long residency. An additional \$25,000 will be designated towards project implementation.

Application Process

[to be made available as an online submission form]

Answer the following questions at this link: [\[LINK\]](#)

1. Why are you interested in the WSDOT AIR opportunity? What do you hope to achieve during the residency?
2. Describe your experience collaborating with professionals without artistic training, government agencies, and with diverse communities. How do you work to ensure that you are successful working across cultural differences?
3. What does equity mean to you? How does your artistic practice relate to this definition?
4. How have you used your artistic practice to identify and help address specific community development challenges?
5. How will you approach the rotation phase of the residency? What do you hope to learn?
6. What type of support do you think you will need ensure that your AIR experience is successful?
7. Two references who can address your strengths as a creative collaborator
 - a. Reference 1
 - i. Name:
 - ii. Title:
 - iii. Organization:

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- iv. Email Address:
 - v. Phone Number:
 - vi. Relationship to applicant:
 - b. Reference 2
 - i. Name:
 - ii. Title:
 - iii. Organization:
 - iv. Email Address:
 - v. Phone Number:
 - vi. Relationship to applicant:
8. Attach a PDF portfolio of relevant work samples.
 - a. The portfolio should include a maximum of ten images. Links to video and/or audio files are permitted within the PDF.
 - b. File size should not exceed 5MB.
 - c. Each image should include a title including the artist's name; title, date, and location of project; artist's role in project and names of collaborators; budget; commissioning agency or client; project manager's name if applicable.
9. Attach a CV in PDF format.

Tentative Schedule

- November 2018: Call for artists released
- January 7th, 2018: Call for artists deadline
- January-February 2018: Interviews & selection of artist
- March 2018: Residency begins with orientation with T4America and SSTI staff, and continues with rotations through WSDOT's divisions for four months.
- April 2018: Monthly video check-in with artist; rotations continue
- May 2018: Monthly video check-in with artist; rotations continue
- June 2019: Rotations conclude; In person check-in meeting with T4America, WSDOT leadership, and artist; artist begins brainstorming projects and presents preliminary ideas at meeting
- July 2019: Monthly video check-in with artist
- August 2019: Monthly video check-in with artist
- September 2019: Monthly video check-in with artist; public webinar with artist, T4America staff, and WSDOT staff
- October 2019: In person check-in meeting with T4America, WSDOT leadership, artist, and a small cohort of artists and administrators
- November 2019: Monthly video check-in with artist
- December 2019: Monthly video check-in with artist
- January 2019: Monthly video check-in with artist
- February 2019: Residency conclusion and final meeting with T4America, WSDOT

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leadership, and artist; second public webinar presentation

Questions?

Contact Ben Stone, Director of Arts & Culture at Transportation for America and Smart Growth America at bstone@smartgrowthamerica.org