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# Minnesota Department Of Transportation Sustainability and Public Health Fellowship 2022

## CALL FOR ARTISTS

**Date issued:** October 4, 2021

**Application deadline:** December 1, 2021

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

### Project Overview

Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), in partnership with Transportation for America (T4America) and the State Smart Transportation Initiative (SSTI), seek an artist to serve as the Sustainability and Public Health Fellow, an artist-in-residence (AIR) program managed by T4America. The MnDOT AIR will help develop creative methods to explore the intersections of equity, mobility and health to help reduce GHG emissions in the state of Minnesota.

In partnership with MnDOT's Sustainability and Public Health Division (SPHD), the Fellow will experiment with artistic projects, tools, and strategies to reduce transportation carbon pollution, including reducing personal vehicle miles driven. In March 2021, MnDOT agreed to a preliminary goal to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) 20% statewide and per capita by 2050 based on recommendations from the Sustainable Transportation Advisory Council.

The MnDOT Fellow will be based at the MnDOT headquarters in St. Paul, with a preference for 20 hours a week in-the-office-schedule, although a combination of telework and office-based schedules would be considered.

This project will be MnDOT's third year hosting an artist in residence at the Minnesota Department of Transportation. The AIR program follows a number of successful residencies in city agencies, the MnDOT AIR is the second such program at a statewide agency after the launch of Washington State DOT's AIR program in 2019. The MnDOT AIR is generously funded by T4A, McKnight Foundation and MnDOT.

## Sustainability & Public Health Fellowship partners

**Minnesota Department of Transportation:** MnDOT plans, builds, operates and maintains a safe, accessible, efficient and reliable multimodal transportation system that connects people to destinations and markets throughout the state, regionally and around the world.

**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.

## Program background

The concept for the MnDOT AIR grew out of the *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 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. 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.

The 2022-2023 Sustainability and Public Health Fellow will support MnDOT in exploring creative ways of achieving state greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals. In partnership with MnDOT's [Sustainability and Public Health Division \(SPHD\)](#), the Fellow will experiment with artistic projects, tools, and strategies to reduce transportation carbon pollution, including reducing personal vehicle miles driven. In March 2021, MnDOT agreed to a preliminary goal to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) 20% statewide and per capital by 2050 based on recommendations from the Sustainable Transportation Advisory Council.

The Fellow will collaborate with internal and external partners and subject-area experts at Smart Growth America to develop creative approaches to make progress toward the VMT reduction goal. Creative projects may include targeted stakeholder engagement in urban and rural environments, events, or creative ways of increasing public transit use, biking, and walking or supporting efforts by local governments to dedicate their right of way to low carbon and active transportation.

## Artist in Residence 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 MnDOT for a period of 12 months and will begin with rotations through several of MnDOT's divisions. These rotations will focus on providing the AIR knowledge on the operations of MnDOT, staff and administration priorities, strategic and daily challenges, and division culture. The rotations will serve to help the AIR determine MnDOT 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 six weeks; the remaining eight months will be devoted to the AIR's project(s) development and production. Working in close collaboration with T4America and MnDOT staff, the AIR may decide to focus on one large artistic project or series of small creative projects supporting MnDOT sustainability goals for VMT reduction, Complete Streets, promoting better transportation options such as transit, walking or biking, or prioritizing climate smart investments.

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 liaison in MnDOT's Sustainability & Public Health Division.

The AIR will update T4America through bi-weekly video conferences. These updates, as well as quarterly updates from MnDOT 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, MnDOT leadership and the AIR will present a summary of the residency experience to the secretaries of the DOTs that participate in the SSTI community of practice to encourage adoption of this approach by additional state DOTs. The AIR and MnDOT will share information on the residency through webinars and conference presentations in the months after its completion. The MnDOT will also have the opportunity to learn from and share experiences with other artists embedded in other state agencies.

## Residency tasks

The AIR is expected to:

- Join in bi-weekly check in calls with the project leadership team.
- Implementation of (1) large artistic project, or a series of small creative projects supporting MnDOT sustainability goals for VMT Reduction, Complete Streets, Promoting Transportation Options or Prioritizing Climate Smart Investments.
- conduct a brief analysis of innovative public engagement tactics utilized for MnDOT projects to engage underrepresented communities in reducing carbon pollution.
- provide a summary of interviews with MnDOT employees and external stakeholders around greater Minnesota after the Rotation phase of Fellowship.
- participate in a minimum of (3-5) webinars by partner organizations to explain the artistic projects and outcomes of the Fellowship.
- Complete a final report with recommendations for MnDOT.
- Maintain a working presence in MnDOT by attending and participating in MnDOT and community meetings, and meeting regularly with relevant MnDOT 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 MnDOT's protocols.
- Become familiar with relevant agency processes to ensure that proposed projects directly connect to the actual work of MnDOT.
- 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 MnDOT achieve their articulated sustainability and public health 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.
- Prior experience working in governmental agencies is not required but preferred.
- Basic knowledge of the diverse services provided by MnDOT and a sincere eagerness to learn more about the goals of MnDOT

## Eligibility

This residency is open to artists 18 years of age or older who are residents of the state of Minnesota and 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 at MnDOT headquarters in St Paul, MN for the duration of the residency, or a combination of telework and in-person office presence. 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 and MnDOT 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. The AIR will present project concepts and requests for funding in the \$10,000-\$15,000 range towards project implementation. Additional funds will be available to cover travel across Minnesota and for occasional travel out of state.

## Application process

Answer the following questions at this link:

<https://smartgrowthamerica.org/what-we-do/programs/mndot-air-apply/>

1. Why are you interested in the MnDOT artist in residence 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. Describe your interest in reducing carbon pollution from transportation and promoting better transportation options such as transit, walking and biking.
5. Describe your experience collaborating across urban and rural communities.
6. How have you used your artistic practice to identify and help address specific community development challenges?
7. How will you approach the rotation phase of the residency? What do you hope to learn?
8. What type of support do you think you will need to ensure that your AIR experience is successful?
9. Two references who can address your strengths as a creative collaborator.
  1. Reference 1
    1. Name:
    2. Title:
    3. Organization:
    4. Email Address:
    5. Phone Number:
    6. Relationship to applicant:
  2. Reference 2
    1. Name:
    2. Title:
    3. Organization:
    4. Email Address:
    5. Phone Number:
    6. Relationship to applicant:
10. Attach a PDF portfolio of relevant work samples.
  1. The portfolio should include a maximum of ten images. Links to video and/or audio files are permitted within the PDF.
  2. File size should not exceed 5MB.
  3. 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.
11. Attach a resume/CV in PDF format.

## Tentative Schedule

- October 2021 Call for artists released
- December 1, 2021 Call for artists deadline
- December 2021 Interviews & selection of artist
- February 2022 Residency begins with orientation with T4America and MnDOT, continues with rotations through MnDOT's divisions for six weeks.
- March 2022 Rotations conclude; In person check-in meeting with T4America,

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- March 2022 MnDOT leadership, and artist; artist begins brainstorming projects and presents preliminary ideas at meeting
  - April 2022 Public webinar with artist, T4America staff, and MnDOT staff
  - May - July 2022 Artist presents project concept(s) and budget request to team
  - August 2022 Monthly video check-in with artist, T4America and MnDOT staff
  - September - December 2022 Public webinar with artist, T4America staff, and MnDOT staff
  - January 2023 Monthly video check-in with artist, T4America and MnDOT staff
- Residency conclusion and final meeting with T4America, MnDOT leadership, and artist; second public webinar presentation

## Questions?

Contact Ebony Venson, Program Associate at Smart Growth America at [evenson@smartgrowthamerica.org](mailto:evenson@smartgrowthamerica.org)