

National Playwright Residency Program Goals (from Mellon Foundation materials)

- To advance the state of playwrights in the American theater by providing them with space, time and resources;
- To influence the working environment of theaters by embedding playwrights in them;
- To help the field (including other funders) understand the value of embedding playwrights in theaters;
- To work toward an ideal of having writers become salaried employees of theaters at rates commensurate with senior staff.

Additional goals (expressed by HowlRound)

- To influence the theater field more generally by increasing the visibility and influence of diverse artistic voices;
- To change the relationship between theaters and communities as a result of working with playwrights who have strong community ties;
- To shift in the balance of power between playwright and institution by providing resources to the playwright such as micro-funds and artistic development residencies that took some financial pressure off of theaters while enabling the playwrights to expand their artistic vision in new or ambitious directions.

Program components

- Grants to theaters to employ one working playwright full-time over three year period;
- Documentation and information dissemination (commons producers; recorded conversations; articles and videos posted on HowlRound);
- Convenings of participating theaters and playwrights;
- Site visits by HowlRound staff and ongoing consultations with participants;
- Artistic developmental residencies for playwrights at Emerson College;
- Microgrants for playwrights (\$30,000 for each playwright over the three-year period);
- Requirement that theaters produce at least one work by the resident playwright during the grant term.

Grantmaking to date

- First round (2012-2016):
 - Program planning informed by advisory committee
 - 38 theaters invited to apply with applications that included statements by both artistic director and playwright
 - Proposals vetted by advisory committee and Mellon staff
 - 14 theaters granted three-year awards ranging from \$161,000 to \$303,000 (terms varied from 36 to 42 months)
- Second round (2016-2020):
 - 9 residencies renewed (via application process)
 - 51 theaters applied through an open application process
 - Proposals vetted by advisory committee and Mellon staff
 - 9 additional theaters granted multi-year awards; grants range from \$190,000 to \$349,000 (terms varied from 36 to 44 months)

Program Participants

2012-2015

Alliance Theatre

Susan V. Booth, Artistic Director
 Pearl Cleage, Playwright

Cutting Ball Theater

Rob Melrose, Artistic Director
 Andrew Saito, Playwright

Dallas Theater Center

Kevin Moriarty, Artistic Director
 Will Power, Playwright

Huntington Theatre Company

Peter DuBois, Artistic Director
 Melinda Lopez, Playwright

Kansas City Repertory Theatre

Eric Rosen, Artistic Director
 Nathan Louis Jackson, Playwright

Mixed Blood Theatre

Jack Reuler, Artistic Director
 Aditi Kapil, Playwright

Oregon Shakespeare Festival
Bill Rauch, Artistic Director
Luis Alfaro, Playwright

Playwrights Horizons
Tim Sanford, Artistic Director
Dan LeFranc, Playwright

Soho Repertory Theater
Sarah Benson, Artistic Director
David Adjmi, Playwright

South Coast Repertory
Marc Masterson, Artistic Director
Julie Myatt, Playwright

Ten Thousand Things Theater Company
Michelle Hensley, Artistic Director
Kira Obolensky, Playwright

Victory Gardens Theater
Chay Yew, Artistic Director
Marcus Gardley, Playwright

Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company
Howard Shalwitz, Artistic Director
Robert O'Hara, Playwright

Z Space Studio
Lisa Steindler, Artistic Director
Peter Nachtrieb, Playwright

2016-2019

Continuing theaters:

Alliance Theatre
Susan V. Booth, Artistic Director
Pearl Cleage, Playwright

Dallas Theater Center
Kevin Moriarty, Artistic Director

Will Power, Playwright

Huntington Theatre Company
Peter DuBois, Artistic Director
Melinda Lopez, Playwright

Kansas City Repertory Theatre
Eric Rosen, Artistic Director
Nathan Louis Jackson, Playwright

Oregon Shakespeare Festival
Bill Rauch, Artistic Director
Luis Alfaro, Playwright

Ten Thousand Things Theater Company
Michele Hensley, Artistic Director
Kira Obolensky, Playwright

Victory Gardens Theater
Chay Yew, Artistic Director
Marcus Gardley, Playwright

Z Space Studio
Lisa Steindler, Artistic Director
Peter Nachtrieb, Playwright

New participants:

Adventure Stage of Chicago
Tom Arvetis, Artistic Director
Carlos Murillo, Playwright

Company One Theatre
Shawn LaCount, Artistic Director
Kirsten Greenidge, Playwright

HERE (Home for Contemporary Theatre and Art)
Kristin Marting, Artistic Director
Taylor Mac, Playwright

Ma-Yi Theater Company
Ralph Pena, Artistic Director
Rehana Lew Mirza and Mike Lew, Playwrights

Marin Theatre Company

Jasson Minadakis, Artistic Director
Lauren Gunderson, Playwright

Perseverance Theatre
Art Rotch, Artistic Director
Vera Starbard, Playwright

Pillsbury House + Theatre
Faye M. Price and Noel Raymond
Christina Ham, Playwright

San Diego Repertory Theatre
Sam Woodhouse, Artistic Director
Herbert Siguenza, Playwright

Two River Theatre Company
John Dias, Artistic Director
Madeleine George, Playwright

Activities of Playwrights During Residencies (2012-2016)

Related to their own play-making and artistic work:

- Wrote plays (and novels, screenplays and other literary work; and translated work from other languages)
- Workshopped plays
- Gave readings
- Remounted plays or had new plays produced

Related to theaters' artistic programming and season planning:

- Advised on play selection/season planning
- Read new scripts
- Directed plays
- Dramaturged other playwrights' plays
- Provided literary management for theater

Related to audience engagement and community relations:

- Served as ambassador for the theater, did community relations work and civic interactions
- Led or participated in audience engagement activities
- Networked the theater with non-arts communities and organizations
- Worked with community youth – conducted workshops on theater and scene writing; led summer seminars with high school students
- Helped plan and/or participate in cultural festivals and community-building convenings and conferences
- Conducted writing workshops and classes with audience members (including prison in-mates)
- Taught playwriting
- Helped launch local writers' group

Related to Board development and fundraising:

- Attended and/or presented at Board meetings
- Led writing workshop with Board members
- Provided grantwriting assistance and participated in fundraising activities

Related to other theater work:

- Provided marketing/advertising services – storytelling and articles about the theater
- Conducted social media
- Participated in staff Leadership Team; attended staff meetings
- Elevated visibility of local playwrights, helped strengthen community of local artists
- Served as ambassador from the theater to local artists – meetings with emerging artists, weekly writers groups, salons for artists and patrons to discuss artistic themes, meetings with visiting artists
- Helped write an organizational Values Statement
- Supported initiatives on diversity and building cultural awareness