



Alaska Native Playwrights Project

Project Overview

Alaska Native Playwrights Project (ANPP) seeks to identify, teach and nurture Alaska Native playwrights and to establish a repertoire of uniquely Alaska Native plays derived from the rich oral tradition of Alaska's eleven indigenous cultures and the artists' own personal narratives.

Ten Alaska Native artists from across the state will be selected for mentorships with recognized professional indigenous playwrights from Alaska and the Lower 48. Each selected Alaska Native writer will participate in an eight-day writing workshop with the professionals, or Teaching Artists, who will also mentor them through the 8-month process of creating a "first draft" play.

These plays – full-length or one-act – will be completed by August 31, 2012, and will receive public staged readings in November, 2012.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Who should apply? All Alaska Native artists are encouraged to apply, whether or not their primary artistic discipline is the written word. Candidates may be emerging or experienced playwrights, or artists working in any medium or discipline, including non-literary. Examples: poets, storytellers, dancers, musicians; last year's cohort included a sculptor and a nurse!

Do I have to know how to write a play? No. The Teaching Artists, all Native professional playwrights, know that they will be working with a range of students – some with theater experience, some without. New, as well as emerging and experienced, playwrights will be mentored through the process of developing a story into a play during the eight-day playwriting workshop at ANHC in January, 2012 and the following 8 months.

Do I have to be a writer? What if my work is exclusively oral tradition? No problem, as long as you are willing to learn to commit your stories to paper. Our goal is to identify Native artists who wish to tell their stories in the form of a play, whether or not they have previous experience as professional writers. If selected, you will be expected to produce a play script in written form for the Project. So we will be judging writing skills in the application materials.

What kinds of stories or themes are appropriate to become plays? Pretty much anything can become a play which contains two or more characters and has a story line. We expect plays will be developed across the spectrum from traditional Alaska Native stories to the artists' own contemporary stories. Whether you want to adapt an old family story, address a social issue or create a new science fiction fantasy, there is no bad idea in this Project.

Do I have to have a specific story in mind when I apply? Yes. The Playwriting Workshop is designed to help you develop a story for treatment as a play, so while it is not essential that every detail is worked out in advance we do ask that you include a one-paragraph story idea description in your Statement of Purpose. The strongest applications will be those with a compelling story idea and a clear sense of where the applicant wants to take it in the process.

What is a bio? In 150 words or less, give a short description of who you are, your level of education and your relevant accomplishments. Examples may be found online at www.ehow.com and other sites.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) - Continued

What is a C.V. or resume? The Curriculum Vitae (CV) or resume is a summary of your educational background and relevant job experience. Examples and templates may be found online at www.jobsearch.about.com and other sites.

What is required for the Writing Sample? Up to ten (10) pages of your writing which best represents your style and point of view. Playwrights should submit a scene or excerpt from an existing play; all others may submit any written material which demonstrates creative writing skill and a potential for being retold as a play. Storytellers and others whose work is strictly oral are asked to write one of your pieces as a short story or scene with the characters from the story.

What is the Statement of Purpose? In 300 words or less, this is where you tell the Selection Committee why you wish to learn to become a playwright, or if you already are a playwright, why you want to participate in this Project. This is also where you pitch your story idea.

What is meant by “first draft” play? Every playwright, after hearing his/her work read for the first time, will want to make changes to the original script – that is a normal part of the writing process. What we expect as an outcome of the year-long Playwrights Project is a play in the proper manuscript form and ready to be read or performed by actors. It must be complete, but we don't expect it to be “finished”!

What are the criteria for selection? The ideal candidate will, through the submitted materials, demonstrate the ability to:

- Describe a compelling story idea in one paragraph
- Create interesting characters in his/her writing
- Present a clear style and point of view
- Complete the task of writing a play

What will be my time commitment? Eight days (January 6-13) for the Playwriting Workshop in Anchorage, not including travel days, an eight-month commitment to write the play in your home community under the mentorship of a Teaching Artist and ANHC staff, three scheduled teleconferences (April, June and August, 2012) with Teaching Artist, dramaturg and staff, and five days in November, 2012, for the final staged readings in Anchorage.

What are the deadlines and important dates to remember?

Wednesday, August 31, 2011 – Deadline for applications

Monday, October 31, 2011 – Announcement of Selected Writers

January 5 – 15, 2012 – Playwriting Workshop (Anchorage, AK), including travel days

January 13-14, 2012 – Native Theater Festival at Alaska Native Heritage Center

August 31, 2012 – Deadline for completion of scripts

November, 2012 – Public staged readings of plays

Where to send your application: Ed Bourgeois, Alaska Native Playwrights Project
8800 Heritage Center Dr., Anchorage, AK 99504

Electronic submissions will be accepted in Word or PDF format. Type SUBMISSION in the subject line and send email to ebourgeois@alaskanative.net.

For more information: Email ebourgeois@alaskanative.net or call (907) 330-8057